

hope is the strongest power

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hope is the strongest power

by [sarayin](#)

Summary

this is an alternative storyline that follows after the ferry incident

“I want you out of my house. Pack your things and leave,” May said in as strong as a voice as she could through the tears in her eyes. She blinked them away and shook her head before making her way into her room, not stopping to look at Peter even once.

Not Peter, she corrected herself.
Spiderman.

OR

the one in which peter gets kicked out after may finds out and has to now learn how to survive when hope seems bleak.

Notes

new fic!! this one is probably going to be a long one :)
(also expect lots of whump and angst and a hella lot of feels)
pls help me improve with feedback, love it? hate it? let me know.

Chapter 1

“Okay, it’s not working out. I’m gonna need the suit back.”

These ten words were enough to break Peter Parker’s heart into two. He knew he had made a mistake, but it didn’t warrant an action like this. Mr. Stark couldn’t take the suit. He just couldn’t.

“For how long?” Peter asked, desperate.

“Forever,” Mr. Stark declared.

Something sank in Peter’s chest. “No,” he weakly started, “no, no, please, please-”

“Let’s have it,” Tony asked again, clearly not in the mood for arguing any more.

“No, you don’t understand!” Peter exclaimed, “I’m nothing without this suit.”

Something clicked in his mentor’s eyes and Peter hoped maybe, *maybe* he had said the right thing.

“If you’re nothing without this suit,” Tony started in a determined voice, “then you shouldn’t have it, okay?”

Yep, definitely not the right thing to say. Peter couldn’t think of anything more to say. The best thing that had happened to him had just been ripped apart from him. The thing that gave him purpose, that made him get out of bed in the morning.

Gone.

No, a voice in Peter’s head said bitterly, *not gone. Lost because of your own fault.*

How could he argue with Mr. Stark? He wasn’t doing anything wrong after all. Peter had just killed hundreds of people and this seemed to dawn on him at this moment. He opened and closed his mouth a few times, not being able to decide what to say to make this situation even a little better.

Deciding against it, Peter mumbles, “I don’t have any other clothes on me.”

Tony looked the boy over but he couldn’t decide what was going on in his brain behind the mask he put on.

“Okay,” Tony started, “I’ll take care of that, c’mon.”

--

Peter dejectedly knocked on his Aunt’s door clad in a cheap tourist shop T-shirt and shorts. Mr. Stark had offered him a ride home but Peter, too embarrassed by what he was wearing and what he had just done had just shook his head no and walked away. He didn’t look back at the older man, didn’t see his concerned look as he watched the young boy walk and turn into an alley, didn’t see his Mr. Stark rub his hand over his face, sigh and walk back to his car.

Peter had relied on muscle memory to walk home because his mind was somewhere else. He couldn’t stop thinking of what had just happened. The events still hadn’t sunk in for him and he knew that things would get messy when the full impact of it came. For now though, he was just exhausted. He didn’t want anything to do but crash. As soon as he saw Aunt May open the door and look at her nephew up and down, Peter knew he had to wait a long while before he could lock

himself up in his bedroom.

“Peter, what happened?” Aunt May asked, concerned.

Peter just shook his head as he walked inside the apartment and took a seat at the dining table, too tired to keep standing. Aunt May followed him inside and sighed at the young boy’s appearance. She couldn’t help but feel frustrated at this moment. He looked shabby and was wearing oversized tourist shop clothes. She didn’t know anything about what has been going on with him lately and she voiced this out to him.

Peter just sighed, trying to control his breathing and keep his tears at bay.

This angered May even more, so she continued, “You’ve been sneaking out at night, I ran into your physics teacher at the supermarket and he says he hasn’t been seeing you in class lately! Imagine my surprise, Peter, because I had to tell him I have been sending my nephew to school every day with a goddamn goodbye kiss!” May was seething and Peter couldn’t take it.

He couldn’t do it anymore, couldn’t keep anymore secrets, couldn’t disappoint another person he loved and respected. It was no use to stop the tears any longer. Peter was too frustrated and angry and everything inside him bubbled up and-

“I’m Spiderman!”

.

It was out.

Fuck.

A moment of silence descended over the Parker household. Nothing moved, except Peter’s shaking form and May’s trembling lips.

“W-What?” May stuttered out.

Peter looked up at his aunt and could feel his heart break at how shocked and offended she looked.

“I mean, not anymore,” Peter started to explain, “Mr. Stark took away my suit today after he saved the ferry and-”

“The ferry?” May cut him off with a whisper. A look of recognition came to May’s eyes as she connected the dots between the news she had been watching on the TV and the young boy, no, she corrected herself, *Spiderman*, standing in front of her. “Y-you were at the f-ferry?”

“I-I,” Peter tried to answer but he couldn’t find the right words to say.

For the second time today, he thought.

So Peter resorted to staring at the ground. This is not how he wanted May to find out, at all. There were supposed to be tears and anger, but it was to end in hugs and love and support.

Peter looked up and started his apology but before he could get a word out, May spoke up, “What else?”

She stared right at Peter, her hands wrung together, squeezing each other to ground herself. Her mind was a muddled puddle, she couldn’t form full sentences yet.

“Washington Tower,” Peter replied solemnly.

May nodded to herself and swallowed air. She was as bad as controlling her tears as her nephew. No, not nephew, she thought again, *Spiderman*.

“Berlin,” Peter continued.

This May did not recognize. “Berlin?” she asked, confused.

“That was my first mission,” Peter explained, “when Mr. Stark first came. He recruited me.”

“He *made* you Spiderman?” May asked, angry at the billionaire. How dare he recruit her nephew into this world of danger and violence?

“No,” Peter replied, cautious of his words, “I had gotten my powers before- 6 months before.”

Oh.

“Wait,” May asked suddenly, “6 months?”

Peter simply nodded.

“When Ben...” May trailed off. Peter didn’t know how to respond.

May cleared her throat and wiped off the stray tears. “You had your powers when Ben...?”

There it was. The greatest disappointment Peter had, now used to punch him in the face.

“I’d gotten them just a few days before Ben,” Peter replied, feeling his heart sink.

“And you didn’t... use them?” May asked, shaking.

“I di- I didn’t, I-”

“Get out,” May declared.

The statement shocked Peter, this isn’t how things were supposed to go.

“No May, I won’t go on any missions, I promise-”

“Get. Out.”

Every word that came out of her nephew’s mouth frustrated her.

Missions? Berlin?

No, she corrected herself one last time, this isn’t her nephew. This is Spiderman.

She looked at the crying stranger up and down when he stepped forward to hug her. May took a step backward and put her hands up to stop him.

“I want you out of my house. Pack your things and leave,” May said in as strong as a voice as she could through the tears in her eyes. She blinked them away and shook her head before making her way into her room, not stopping to look at Peter even once.

Not Peter.

Spiderman.

two

Chapter Summary

peter realizes that he isn't coming back anytime soon.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

When Peter left his house, no, *Aunt May's house*, he didn't know how long it would be before he was allowed back in. He had packed accordingly too. It would at most be a day, he thought. Surely his aunt wouldn't be heartless enough to let him live on the streets forever. These were the thoughts that clouded his mind as he sat in an alley close enough to his apartment building's entrance so that he could keep an eye on the door for May. Usually, May would be stepping out for her weekly grocery run today and Peter hoped to convince her of how sorry he was of hiding things from her. But with the sky turning deep shades of blue, Peter's hope for a reunion was wavering.

He had changed into a hoodie and his worn jeans but the chilly air made him blow out air and rub his hands on his arm to generate some warmth. Peter had packed one more jeans and two sweaters in his backpack. He had overpacked, for sure. Surely, he would be back to his cozy room no later than tomorrow.

He had stuffed all the money he had in his drawer, around \$90 and change, pocket money that he had been saving to buy Christmas gifts and to pay for his usual order at Delmar's. Peter sat and fiddled with the webshooters in his hands, unable to keep still with all the thoughts running in his mind.

Why isn't May coming down? Is she going to actually make me sleep out here? What if-

The thoughts were cut down by his stomach growling loudly. Sighing and deciding that his Aunt was not coming down tonight, he got up to make his way to Delmar's for a sandwich. He put on his earphones to drown out the harsh sound of night time traffic but couldn't find it in himself to play any music. Happy music would just annoy him and sad music would not help in keeping Peter from crying in public and making a fool out of himself. Peter mostly walked with his head bent down, a habit that had gotten him crashing into Flash and then getting pushed backwards on more occasions than one. But a distant sound caught his attention, causing him to snap his head up to look at the 15 TV screens in the window of an electronics shop.

“...we have in studio today Ellie and her daughter, Grace, both of whom were on the ferry departing from New York this evening,” the reporter drawled.

Peter picked up the pace and stood in front of the television screens, taking out his earphones at the sight of the lady and her little daughter.

“Tell us about the events of today?”

“It was terrifying,” the woman started, almost in tears, “we were just sitting and then a bright beam of light just... It just cut open the ferry boat! And.. and my h-husband,” she sobbed.

“Daddy got hurt,” the little girl popped in, “he was hit by the man with he big guns and he had to go to the ho-pi-tal.”

The woman smiled through her tears and nodded, “But he’s going to be fine. We can only thank God and of course, Ironman for saving our family and so many others...”

The lady went on but Peter wasn’t listening. He could only hear the little girl.

“Daddy got hurt”

Her big innocent eyes stared right at Peter through the television screen.

“Because of YOU.”

Peter stumbled back from the screens, as if he was hit by lightning. A horn screeched as a car hastily dodged Peter who had unknowingly walked onto the road. Peter covered his ears at the sound in distress and shut his eyes.

He couldn’t hear the curses the drivers and passersby were throwing at him.

Are you blind?

Get outta here punk!

But, Peter could only hear the the sound of his own heart beating rapidly in his chest. He had to get out of here. Suddenly, he launched into a sprint until he found an alley where he crashed next to the dumpster, his head still in the tight grip of his hands.

His senses were dialled to eleven. He could smell the stench of the trash in the dumpster, making his stomach clench but Peter didn’t have any food in there to throw up. He could hear the screeching of tires and the honking of angry drivers. He could feel the fabric of his hoodie brushing against his torso, inflaming the skin.

Too much, too much, too much.

“Yo, yo, come here!” a man called out and Peter could almost cry at the loud sound.

Footsteps shuffled towards him. A figure bent down and tried to pick up his backpack. Even in his state of distress, Peter knew he had to protect his backpack, so he launched forward and gripped it with all his might, yelling out a shaky “No!”

Two arms gripped his waist and pulled him backwards as he flailed his limbs.

“Stop!” Peter yelled.

“Shut up!” came a gruff voice along with a strong fist to his face.

Yep, that’s gonna bruise.

Peter’s sensory overload made the impact of the punch tenfold, causing him to groan loudly in pain. Another kick to the stomach made him double up in pain and crumple to the ground. The man who was holding Peter up let go and shuffled through his backpack for his wallet.

“We gotta get out of here, grab it quick, run!” One of the men called out. Peter heard his backpack being dropped with a thump next to him and footsteps shuffling away. The pain in his stomach was to intense for him to get up and fight back so he just lay there. In a cold alley, alone with just the

noise of Queens traffic to keep him company. At least the pain kept his mind away from the clawing pain in his heart.

It took Peter close to two hours to muster up the energy to sit up. On doing so, Peter leaned his head back on the alley's wall and just stared into space.

It wasn't Aunt May's fault that he was here. She wasn't being heartless. She was giving Peter what he deserved.

Peter understood that. He had hurt her. He had hurt Mr. Stark and Uncle Ben and his parents and.. God, his parents. What did they think of him now? Would they be disappointed in him?

Of course they would be.

Peter had to get away. From everyone. He finally bent forward to see what had left of his backpack. They had left all of his clothes there, as expected. He grabbed his wallets to see that they hadn't been able to grab all his money, thank God. There were still around \$50 in there. Peter looked up from his wallet to see two pieces of metal sitting in the distance.

His webshooters.

He scrambled off as quickly as he could and went close to inspect them. One of them was shattered while the other one was bent out of shape, past the line of any hope of repairing it. A few ears escaped Peter's eyes as he took the broken pieces of his past life and walked to the dumpsters to dispose of them.

He isn't Spiderman anymore.

Peter picked up his backpack and started walking, determined, to the bus station.

He had to get away.

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading!! and thank you for all the lovely comments and kudos <3
let me know what you thought of this chapter!

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

peter has a choice to make: run away or stay and fight?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Peter was glad that it was really late in the night right now because his ears were still a bit sensitive from the episode that had happened not too long ago. He kept his earphones in but didn't play any music as he walked the unfamiliar route to the nearest bus terminal. He had only been there once or twice, when May had dropped him to catch a bus with his Academic Decathlon team for an out of station tournament. Not to mention the streets seemed really different at this time of the night, with barely any people out and flickering street lights.

Even though Peter was a bit scared of getting lost, he was glad that navigating the route kept his mind off of the events of the day.

Let down Mr. Stark.

Let down Aunt May.

Got mugged.

Yep, definitely don't want to think about that.

Taking a few more turns, he finally arrived at the ticket counter.

“When’s the next bus?” Peter asked the half asleep man with a scraggly beard at the counter.

“Next ‘un to Jersey doesn’t leave till 7 a.m.,” he replied gruffly, looking at Peter up and down.

“One ticket, please,” Peter ignored the man’s stare and grabbed his wallet.

“Offline ticket sale starts 3 hours prior to the departure of the bus,” he drawled out as if he had said the same statement thousands of times before.

Peter sighed. It was currently 2 a.m., he’d have to wait two more hours to get a ticket. He started making his way to the uncomfortable looking bench, already dreading sitting alone with his thoughts for the next five hours.

“Foster home?” the man asked slowly, surprising Peter.

“W-Wha- No.”

“Police trouble?”

Peter shook his head.

“Fight with the old man, then?” he prodded again.

“Something like that,” Peter mumbled softly. There were a couple people in the small room of the transit waiting room, mostly asleep. Why the man at the ticket counter took a special interest in him, Peter didn’t know, but he didn’t like it.

“So, what happened?” he asked, putting his legs up on the table and leaning back in his chair.

“I don’t want to talk about it,” Peter stated harshly and went up to put his earphones back on.

“Whoa-Okay Mister, just making some friendly conversation, don’t wanna push any buttons that don’t wanna get pushed,” the man said, taking out a cigarette from his front shirt pocket and putting it between his lips.

Peter felt bad for snapping at the man, he was just being nice. But Peter didn’t want to tell a stranger about his problems. He put on his earphones again and took the time to take in the man’s appearance. His eyes crinkled as he squinted and lit the end of the cigarette. He was wearing old flannel and a truck shop cap.

Peter didn’t know what wiring went wrong in his brain to make him speak up, “I messed up, real bad.” He spoke out suddenly, surprising the man and himself.

The man turned his head towards Peter and asked in his gruff voice, “With your old man?”

“Uh- Um.. Y-Yeah, with him,” Peter stuttered out.

“So, what you’re just like,” the man paused to take a drag from his cigarette, “running away?”

“Um, yeah.. I kind of got kicked out... by my aunt,” he said softly, looking down at his shoes in shame.

“Did ya apologize?”

“Yeah,” Peter sighed, “they didn’t listen.”

The man just chuckled, “ ‘Course they didn’t.”

Peter looked up in surprise and confusion at the man’s answer.

He took another drag and turned to look at the young boy staring at him with knotted eyebrows. “Ya know what saying ‘sorry’ does?” He didn’t wait for an answer, “Nothing. Absolutely nothing. You gotta *show* you’re sorry, make it up to them.”

Peter wasn’t expecting wisdom from a man who looked like an alcoholic at 2 a.m. at a bus stop in Queens. But he was here for it. “How, um, I mean, how can I do that?” he asked, eager.

The man looked at him calculatedly. “I think you should,” he started and then paused for a moment, “Nah, I ain’t got a clue.”

Peter physically slumped into his seat again. The man sighed at this action and spoke again, “Listen kid, I know it ain’t easy but looking at your hoodie,” he pointed at the Midtown tech logo on Peter’s hoodie, “I know you’re smart enough.”

With this, he leaned further back and picked up his phone. Peter turned back and started wringing his hands together, lost in thought.

Make it up to them? How?

What could he do redeem himself in Mr. Stark’s eyes? How can he make it up to May, who hates

him so much that she kicked her out, for hiding the truth from her? How can he expect her to forgive him for not saving Ben because...

He shook his head. He can't think about it, not now.

He looked up at the clock, it was almost half past three. He could stick around and buy the ticket. Or... he could follow the ticket counter man's advice. Make it up to the people that mattered. Or run away.

He looked at his hands, his wrists, where his webshooters used to be. They weren't here now but he is here, he thought, he is here like he always was. He's still the same and he can fix this, he hopes from the bottom of his heart that he can.

Without a second thought he got up. The man looked up from his phone and raised an eyebrow.

"Thank you Mr..." Peter trailed off.

"Greg," the man supplied with a smirk.

"Thank you Mr. Greg," Peter said sincerely and made his way out of the small bus station.

"Take it easy, pal," Greg called out.

Little did Greg know that Peter was planning to do the opposite. He had a lot to figure out first.

In the next two hours, Peter had found a 'comfortable' spot to stay till he completes mission Fix It.

The name was tentative.

It was hard to find an alley without an overflowing dumpster, or a raccoon nest or one that wasn't... overly filthy but after roaming around for almost an hour, Peter had found one with a heap of cardboard cartons dumped in the corner. He opened a few of them to make a made-up carpet to avoid sitting on the dirty floor. The biting cold air made Peter pull his hoodie around him a little tighter.

The alley was a half an hour walk from his school which started in 3 hours, enough time for Peter to chalk down a game plan. The conversation he had had with Mr. Stark after the ferry incident had been playing in Peter's head for the whole time he had been searching for an alley and now, he was almost sure of what he had to do.

"I just wanted to be like you," he had said.

"*And I wanted you to be better.*"

He took out the one notebook that he had stuffed in his bag and started to make a list.

Things to do:

Take down the Vulture. Be better for Mr. Stark.

Stay out of May's way. Give her time and space.

Don't let anyone know about my... situation.

Get new webshooters and suit.

Money left: \$48

He wanted to keep writing but his hands started shaking too much from the cold so he decided that it was enough for now. He pulled up the hood and snuggled into himself in the corner of his alley. His body was still a little sore from the mugging and the exhaustion of the day's events coupled with the lack of food led to his eyes closing against his will.

In a dark alley of Queens, Peter drifted off to sleep with a painful feeling in his heart but hope swelling in his bones.

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading and for the comments! they help me improve so thank youu <3
also for the ones waiting for dad!tony, he will come but not for a little while
this is more of a peter-centric fic but the wait will be worth it (i hope!!)

let me know what you thought :)

lots of action coming in the future!

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

peter adds the most important thing to his list of things to do

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Peter had made it to school just in time for the first bell to ring. The cold had been uncomfortable to sleep in but once Peter drifted, the exhaustion of the day led him to waking up with just 15 minutes to school started. Jumping awake in shock followed by sprinting at full speed found Peter finally relaxing into his seat for first period, Physics, in his seat next to Ned who gave him a confused look but relaxed when Peter mouthed “Alarm didn’t ring” to him.

The teacher was covering a topic that Peter had already studied last week when he had found some free time between patrolling and homework. Still, Peter took down notes and concentrated in class like his life depended on it, and it kind of did. Peter’s hands were still shaking even in the comfortable temperature he was in which meant it wasn’t because of the cold. It took all his effort to push down the million things popping up in his mind and keep his hand steady enough to keep writing, scribbling, anything at this point.

May has only paid the school fees of this semester, till homecoming which was about a month away. How will I pay for the next year?

What if May calls the school and tells them to kick me out?

Where am I going to get food from? Mr. Delmar couldn’t give him any either, his shop was still undergoing repairs from the night of the bank robbery. Not to mention, how will I.. ask him?

It was safe to say that by the end of the school day, Peter had a headache. A bad one. He had gone through lunch with no food and concerned looks from Ned which he dismissed by making an excuse of his stomach not feeling very well because of May’s cooking the previous night. He nodded with recognition and continues with the daily chatter that Peter tried his best to contribute to, ignoring the pain in his stomach.

When the last bell rang, Peter almost groaned with frustration at how hungry he was. That’s it, he decided, he has to tell Ned about it. Surely if he could keep Spiderman a secret, he’ll be able to hide the fact that his friend was technically homeless from his mom. Maybe let him sleepover once in a while or grab him a muffin or a pop tart sometime. Not to mention, he was the guy in the chair so he would be very helpful with the haphazard plan Peter was executing.

He was just about to make his way to the parking lot where him and Ned meet on days they don’t have last period together to walk home with him when he felt something crash into his side. Or should he say, someone.

The force of the crash sent him and whoever fell on top of him tumbling to the ground. A couple people dodged the two people falling in the hallway but quickly made their way out of the building, in a rush to get out of school.

“What the fuck, Penis?”

The bitterness and hatred in the voice he immediately recognized sent a shiver down Peter’s spine.

“Are you completely blind?” Flash’s face came into the view as he towered over Peter’s frame, who was still on the ground.

“I-I-” Peter started in an attempt to defend himself.

“*Just shut up!*” his shrill voice rang in the hallway which had just a few people lingering now, busy in their own conversations, oblivious of what was happening with Peter. After all, Flash bullying Peter was a daily thing, nothing out of the ordinary.

Peter started getting up, knowing from experience it was better to ignore Flash than engage with him but a kick to his shoulders sent him crashing down to the floor, his head hitting the hard, tiled floor with a painful *thump*.

Peter suppressed a groan as Flash grabbed him by his collar and painfully pulled him up, “You stay away from me, you understand? Don’t wanna get infected with whatever you pass around that makes people around you drop like bees, *Penis*.”

He jerks Peter back and stomps his way outside, muttering a small “Worthless piece of shit,” under his breath.

In normal circumstances, Peter would brush off the words, check quickly for any injuries that were too bad, and make his way outside to meet Ned, ignoring the whole episode. But these weren’t normal circumstances.

He made his way as quickly as possible to the washroom and had barely locked himself in one of the stalls before a heavy sob wracked his body. He slid down to the floor and bent his head between his knees and let out another embarrassing sob.

Oh god, he thought, he was right. He was right. He was right.

Tears tumbled down Peter’s face as he tried to keep his breathing steady through the crying. He had been biting on his clenched fist to keep the ugly sounds that came with the cries at bay but they had been escaping nonetheless. He couldn’t care. He couldn’t do anything right. Except hurt people.

The world seemed grey to Peter. He was alone, sitting on the dirty floor of the school’s washroom while all the others had probably left to go home to their parents. Their parents who were alive and loved them and were proud of them. Who hadn’t kicked them out.

Peter took out his phone and shot a quick text to Ned saying that he had to pick up a few books at the library and would take a while so he should just leave.

He should stay away from Peter. People around him just drop like bees, they just keep getting hurt again and again.

All because of Peter.

The tears had stopped flowing and Peter’s swollen, red eyes hurt. He stared at the wall, ridden with scribbles and insults and focused his eyes on a particularly angry “Fuck Penis Parker” written in red marker. Another tear escaped and he closed his eyes.

He can't believe he was thinking of going to Ned for help. Trying to hurt someone, *again*.

Had he learnt nothing from the ferry? From Mr. Stark's disappointed face that had broke Peter's heart into two?

He had to be *better*.

He took out the notebook he had scribbled in in the morning and flipped to the list he had made.

Things to do:

Take down the Vulture. Be better for Mr. Stark.

Stay out of May's way. Give her time and space.

Don't let anyone know about my... situation.

Get new webshooters and suit.

With a pen, he wrote down the thing that mattered the most,

Don't hurt anyone else.

Another tear slipped as he screwed back the cap of his pen and looked at the small list. A voice in his mind cried out, you're never going to make it up to Mr. Stark and Aunt May.

It wasn't an option, he thought to himself.

He had to. He just had to.

May hadn't slept the entire night. She hadn't been overthinking about bills, her nephew, her job, or anything that she normally did when she had a sleepless night.

Last night, though, May just sat on her bed and stared at the wall in front of her. There were a couple of frames put up with photos of her and Peter and one... one of all three of them. Peter, May and... Ben.

Oh, Ben.

There were no tears the whole night. Someone who had seen May sitting may have thought her to be paralyzed. And she was, in a way. She didn't know what to think, to say. How to function, how to move. She didn't know what to do. It seemed like her head was underwater and all the information came filtered through, and didn't register properly in her brain.

When the sun peered through her curtains, telling her it was time to get ready for work. May just got up, changed into a shirt and trousers, grabbed her keys and headed out of the house.

She ignored the box of Peter's favorite cereal, sitting untouched. Ignored the half open room of her nephew with the absence of the boy combing his hair back in the mirror. Ignored that she was alone. Alone, again.

Over the next few days, Peter had figured out a kind of schedule for himself that was successful in keeping his mind off of all the things going wrong in his life. Which was a lot of things.

He still slept on top of the cardboard boxes in the alley and wore both his thin sweaters and his one large Midtown hoodie to keep him from freezing in the chilly air. It wasn't enough by any standards as he still got up multiple times in the middle of the night, shivering. But it had to do.

From there he made his way to school which was, to his relief, much warmer. He didn't have money for lunch but managed to get either a banana or an apple from Ned. When Ned asked why he wasn't getting any lunch for himself, he just shrugged and said something along the lines of having a very heavy breakfast, having a stomach bug or the most believable one, hating the cafeteria's sick excuse of 'food'. Though the truth was that Peter wouldn't even mind having their disgusting fish tacos.

To keep his mind off of food, he concentrated on the list he had made for himself. Peter had managed to thrift a red hoodie and blue pants from the local Goodwill store for \$13. He had also bought a small packet of laundry detergent that he kept in his locker for \$4.

He didn't want to waste money at a laundromat so he washed his underwear and clothes himself as nicely as he could after school ended. When everyone leaves, Peter makes his way to the gym showers and takes a shower and washes his clothes there.

He puts his phone on charging for a few hours in the computer lab everyday and after school, makes his way to the back alley of a Starbucks where he somehow miraculously gets the wifi of the coffee shop. That is where he does research for the homework he has to complete and later scours the news for reports of the Vulture.

He actively ignores the growl in his stomach induced by the lovely smell of coffee and food coming from the shop. After his research (or the lack of which. No matter how much he looks, he has found no trace of the Vulture yet) he makes his way to the back alleys of a busy street in Queens, littered with takeout restaurants and looks for somewhat edible food in their dumpsters. Peter was familiar with dumpster diving for electronics, but never for food. On good days, he found noodles and on bad days, he got so hungry with his unsuccessful attempts that he bought a \$5 sandwich from the local store.

Every night, he would write his updates on research in the little notebook.

When he wrote down, *Money left: \$21* his hand trembled thinking of how long he would be able to last with no income.

Sometimes, he found himself writing more. About Mr. Stark, about his intrusive thoughts, not that he would ever admit to keeping a *diary*.

But on all nights, without fail, as Peter snuggled up into his himself, right before the exhaustion and hunger of the day pulled him into unconsciousness, he said a silent plea.

I hope you forgive me one day, May, Mr. Stark.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading!!

as always, please let me know what you thought of the chapter, it helps me improve in the future!

thank you for all your lovely comments and kudos, they are greatly appreciated :)

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

peter learns how to survive in the streets

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Peter wishes he was invincible, but he was not. The lack of sleep, food and rest was bound to catch up to him eventually, superpowers or not. But, Peter didn't imagine it would happen like this.

When Peter woke up on Friday morning, he felt like he was dying and that was putting it lightly. His head pounded and despite the cold air, his body was on fire. His throat hurt, so did his stomach, chest and... the rest of his body.

In a way, Peter knew this was going to happen. He knew when he was eating the piece of bread from the dumpster of an Italian restaurant that it was only *almost* okay and *mostly* free of any mould or germs, he was just too hungry to care. So, when Peter suddenly got up and wretched all the food from his stomach next to him in the alley, he really should've expected it.

When he had tried to snuggle up into a ball not humanly possible, gripping his sides tightly at night, trying to focus on anything but the cold, cold air, it was only natural to expect a head-spinning fever and cold.

After Peter had stopped emptying the contents of his stomach, not that there were many, his whole body started shaking slightly. With trembling hands, he checked his phone for the time and noticed that he had around 20 minutes till the first bell rang. Enough time to walk there, he thought. But as soon as he tried to get up, his head swam and the whole world tilted in his view as he slumped down the wall of the valley. He sighed and rested his head on the wall, unable to keep his eyes open.

Okay, he thought, school is not gonna happen today.

Usually, Peter would have been freaking out about this. What if there is a pop quiz? How will he submit his English homework? What will he tell Ned? But, Peter's body did not physically allow him to remain conscious and ask himself these million questions. With the pain coursing through every part of him, he found it difficult to even keep his eyes open, leave alone moving his limbs to carry him to school.

A few tears escaped silently from Peter's eyes but they weren't because of the exhaustion or pain. Yes, he was physically tired but that couldn't compare with how tired he was with constantly keeping his hopes up. His days were filled with researching for Toomes, completing his homework and studying for tests even without his notes that he had left at May's and hoping for an opportunity to redeem himself. Yet, nothing was working in his favor. He had found not a single report of anything related to weapons or a giant bird man, he had forgotten to do his Physics homework the other day and had gotten detention, and as for the redemption... *he hadn't gotten better. He had just gotten worse.*

With this depressing thought, Peter's mind drifted off into unconsciousness, leaving the teenager

curled up in a dirty back alley, all alone.

--

It had been a week since her nephew had been in the room next to her but if you asked May, it may as well have been a year or an hour. Her days consisted of getting up wordlessly (not that she slept much), dressing up and going for work, coming back, eating some leftovers and heading to bed. She barely spoke to anyone and something in her heart constantly hurt.

It was partly anger, hatred, betrayal. Why did he lie to her? Why did he hide something so big from her? *Why did he not save my Ben?*

But was partly sadness, too. *I miss him, is he okay?*

Somehow, all these thoughts were repressed enough to make her absolutely numb to them and everything else around her. Until Friday morning. She had been getting ready for work as usual and had gone to the kitchen to grab some breakfast. Not in the mood to even begin cooking something, she reached out for the nearest cereal to fill her bowl. Coincidentally, she reached not for her usual Muesli Nut mix but Peter's Fruit Loops. *Peter's favorite. Peter, Peter, Peter.*

She stared at the colorful box for a long while as tears started to escape her eyes. *Where is Peter? Where is he?*

It felt like a week's worth of sobs, pain and frustration hit her with full force all of a sudden. She slumped on the floor and gripped the box of cereal tight to her chest. She missed him, she missed him so much. She wanted him to just come back but she didn't know how to forgive him. She just wanted to see him.

May always knew the only reason Peter was applying to colleges in New York was because he didn't want to be far away from her. But with things being the way they are, with nothing tethering him to a place where he had bad memories of his Uncle dying, what if he just left? How will May ever find him?

In a moment of desperation and one thought running in her mind, *I need to see him*, she hastily made her way to the phone and dialled the school's number. She had already paid this semester's fees so it could be that Peter was crashing at Ned's and going to school from there. *If he hasn't left town already.*

The phone rang twice before a voice drawled out, "Midtown Tech, how may I help you?"

"Hello," May started in a shaky voice, "I'm M-May Parker, Peter Parker's guardian. I wanted to know, has he- is he in school?"

She held her breath as her heart pounded rapidly.

"Mr. Parker has not come to school to-"

May didn't have to hear anymore. He was gone. Her boy was gone and he left her. For the first time, she felt absolutely alone in the world. She didn't have anyone to call her own now. Not Ben, not Richard and Mary and now, not even Peter. Tears rolled down her face and she made no attempt to wipe them away. She just stared at the box of cereal in her hand and gave out a heavy sigh.

She moved to keep the box back in its place and placed her bowl back in the cupboard, all appetite lost after the news she had just received. She looked out the window to the city she called home,

the city her nephew had protected. She hadn't heard any news on Twitter, Facebook or the news channel about any reports of Spiderman. He really had left this town, left her.

She contemplated looking for him, but what good would that do? He hated her, he didn't want to be near her, not even in the same city and he had good reason not to. Her head pounded with the million thoughts shooting in her head. Did she forgive him? Maybe not, but was she scared for him, cared for him being safe and sound? Yes. What could she do now?

Her heart ached as she picked up her bag and made her way to do the only thing she could do, go to work and try to distract herself from the fact that she pushed away the only good thing in her life.

--

When Peter woke up, the pain in his body had gone down but by no means had it disappeared. But he was numb enough to sit up by himself and open his eyes. He checked his phone and saw that he had slept for 4 hours and the sun was now peering through the clouds, casting a warm glow on his face. Peter rested his head against the wall and looked up, closing the eyes, just soaking the sunlight and breathing slow. He opened his eyes and saw pigeons fluttering away in the sky and the sound of Queens traffic wasn't as loud as it generally was. There was a soft breeze blowing which was a huge contrast from the chilly gusts of wind that left Peter in a shivering mess at night.

Maybe it was the warm glow of sunlight, or the soft sound of violin coming from a street performer, but something in Peter's heart told him that he'll be okay. He had hope again, he could do this, he could survive this.

With this thought, he got up with a pain filled groan and dusted his clothes while grabbing his backpack. He checked his wallet again, \$21. It was time to stock up on some resources.

By the time it was nearly time for the sun to set, Peter had a full stomach and for the first time in what seemed like a long, long while, he was warm.

He had just finished writing the list of supplies he had bought in the notebook that had come to become his journal now.

1 chicken soup- \$4

2 McDonalds burgers- \$4

Advil- \$5

1 warm jacket (thrifted)- \$7

Money left: \$1

He had already finished the soup and had an Advil and was feeling much better than in the morning. He still had one and a half burger left and his warm jacket was wrapped up tightly around him. It was a grey colored puffer jacket that had a hood that engulfed Peter's head and made him feel he was in a cocoon. It was possibly 2 sizes too big but he didn't care, it made him feel safe and warm.

But, no matter how safe and warm he felt, the fact that he only had a dollar left in his pocket told him that it would only become increasingly hard for him to live here. He knew he had to find a source of money, and soon. But tonight, he was just going to relish the fact that his stomach wasn't growling and his body wasn't shivering.

Shooting a quick excuse of a reply to Ned's text asking him why he didn't come to school, he curled up on the cardboard boxes and closed his eyes. His phone was almost out of charge now as

he hadn't put it on charge at school like he normally did. He tried to ignore the nagging voice in his head telling him he hadn't done anything productive today, didn't research or work more on the webshooter designs he was yet to complete. But just for tonight, he ignored those thoughts and promised himself to do better tomorrow.

Just for tonight, he dozes off into a dreamless sleep.

The next morning, Peter woke up feeling more energized than he had for the past week, finally having gotten a full night's sleep. Even though it was still cold with the jacket on, it was a huge improvement from his mere sweatshirt. The extra energy came in handy when he sat to plan out what his next steps were.

One thing was clearly on priority: Some money. Before Peter could use his weekend to go off looking across town for a job, he stopped by the local library for an hour to charge his phone and finish his homework. He called Ned when his phone turned on to know the work he missed on Friday and caught up with all his homework before he saw that his phone was now on full power. He was ready.

Putting a cheery song on in his earphones, Peter made his way to the busy part of town to get a source of income for the time he was going to be living on the streets. The cheerful mood only lasted a day though because as the sun was about to set, Peter found himself back to his alley with no success. He let his backpack drop on the ground as he sat with his head in his hands.

Peter had spent close to 9 hours going door to door in places ranging from restaurants to book stores to clothing stores, laundromats, libraries, electronic stores, even hair salons, to look for anything he could do with absolutely no luck. He had half heartedly scribbled his number and given it to all of them in case anything popped up but he doubted if any one of them hadn't thrown it into the trash.

He was exhausted and had already finished the burgers from yesterday. He was hungry but he couldn't bear the thought of spending his last dollar. It wasn't much, he knew that, but he couldn't just... not have any money on him. He racked his brain for any alternatives. He couldn't ask Ned and didn't really have anyone else at school he was close to. Couldn't ask Mr. Delmar because the man had been through enough. Just when all hope was lost, a name popped into his head, a ray of hope. And he knew just where to find him.

--

He quietly crouched behind a car in the parking lot, waiting for the man in question. The sound of a whistling tune and footsteps made his head snap into the direction of the lean man walking towards his car. Gotcha, Peter thought.

He walked towards him, wearing his red hoodie and blue pants that he had thrifted a week ago as well as his makeshift black mask, one that made Peter feel like a bank robber.

The man was busy loading his bag of groceries into the back of his car when Peter cleared his throat to grab his attention. He looked back at the the small boy and grinned a little, "Ay, its Spiderboy."

"It's.. It's *Spiderman*," Peter explained exasperatedly.

"Same difference," he shrugged, "What's with the pajama set?" he asked pointing towards Peter's

outfit.

“It’s... nothing. I-I need some money,” he stuttered out, trying to sound confident.

Aaron got the hint, the boy obviously didn’t want to answer any questions and Aaron wasn’t gonna dig for answers anyway, he had been in this business too long to know not to go poking his nose in what doesn’t relate to him. So, he just simply grabbed his wallet and grabbed the only \$50 note left from his grocery trip and handed it out to him without question.

“It’s all I have,” he simply said.

Peter looked at the note, confused how easily he had gave it to him, and grabbed it from his hand.

Aaron turned around, having already loaded his groceries and made his way to the driver’s seat, unaffected by the fact that a person in a ridiculous costume had just asked him for money.

“T-Thank you, for this,” Peter said hastily.

Aaron turned to take in the appearance of the boy. He was a skinny boy, he had to admit. Kind of reminded him of his nephew.

“Don’t sweat it,” he stated, “I saw what you did at the ferry...”

Peter looked down at his feet, ashamed.

“It takes balls, kid. You stay safe, alright?” He said, surprising Peter enough to make him look at the man. Without waiting for an answer, he sat in his car and made his way out the parking lot, leaving Peter to stand there, a little shaken.

But most importantly, he had some money in his hands.

He, too, slowly made his way out of the parking lot and slipped into the alleys, making his way to his own alley. On reaching, he changed, stuffed the money into his backpack and took a deep breath, looking at the sky, unable to untangle the jumble of thoughts in his head.

--

Somewhere a little far away, Tony gazed out of his window looking at the same sky. He hadn’t really thought much about the kid since the ferry incident partly because his work had been keeping him busy, because FRIDAY had nothing to report on any rogue spider boy but mostly because he didn’t want to think about the defeated look on the kid’s face.

But today, as he looked at the report sent to him by the FBI stating that nothing could be heard about the weapons or the people related to it, he couldn’t help but think of the boy he hadn’t heard the excited voice of or received a string of texts from in too long. Everyone on the ferry had successfully gone underground for good. Maybe Iron Man’s involvement with the already scary FBI had scared them off.

Tony had a little doubt that it could be that easy but brushed it off. He looked at the buildings that were missing their Spiderman swinging off of them and turned away. He knew it was necessary to take the suit away, he couldn’t put the kid in danger and he couldn’t bear the thought of him getting hurt because *he* pulled him into this mess.

Tony sighed. He hoped the kid was safe, he thought before heading back to the lab not before telling FRIDAY to close the blinds on the windows.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading!! this chapter is longer than the previous ones and i hope you liked it :)

as always, please let me know your thoughts through the comments.
and thank you for all the support <3

lots of action awaits!

(also if you're craving some dad!tony, you can check out my other completed fic on here, its a good dose of feels :))

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

peter doesn't want to be useless anymore

Chapter Notes

warning for a self deprecating thoughts, angst and (kind of?) anxiety
take care of yourselves :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Peter reached school on Monday with a growling stomach and his journal full of webshooter designs that he had scribbled hastily till his hands had shaken too much from the cold. He had had one burger from McDonald's the day before, not the most healthy, he knew, but it was cheap and if he was honest, Peter was scared. He remembered the time not too long ago that he had only a dollar in his hands. More than the growling stomach, his heart beat faster just thinking about being so helpless as to not even afford a decent meal. Now that, by whatever fluke, Peter had gotten some money from Alex, he was going to save it.

He had already spent close to \$11 in supplies for the webshooters that he couldn't find in the tens of dumpsters that he had scoured the night before until he was too exhausted to walk any more. The conviction in Peter's mind to head into the Robotics lab for his first period and finish executing his designs made him overlook Ned who was standing next to his locker. Ned noticed his friend walking, hell, striding towards class 5 minutes before the bell rang and called out for him.

Peter was shaken from his trance and looked back at his best friend who looked at him with a look of concern.

“Hey man, how- how've you been? Is your fever okay?” he asked.

Peter was reminded of the excuse he had made for missing school on Friday. Well, technically it wasn't a lie, he *had* been sick.

“Yeah, yeah, it's good man, I'm good,” he replied, looking anywhere but at his face so as to not let it show that he was lying.

But Ned wasn't stupid, he squinted, “I didn't even know you could get sick, you know? With your like, spider powers and all that.”

Peter didn't know either. Ever since the spider bite, he hadn't really gotten sick ever, not even in flu season. But Peter counted off Friday's incident to the temperature and the fact that he hadn't eaten real food in a long while. Could it be that spidey powers were going down because his body was becoming weaker? Because he wasn't getting enough food?

“Yeah, I guess I just had an off day or something,” he replied, gripping the shoulder straps of his backpack tightly, ready to get out of this uncomfortable conversation.

Ned sighed, having had enough of this, “What’s going on man?” he cut to the chase. “Y-You’re super jumpy and you don’t reply to my texts and- and you missed school! I’ve seen you come to school with the worst case of diarrhea in human history because you didn’t wanna miss a test, so come on man...” he trailed off.

Peter looked down at his feet, ashamed of getting caught at his sad attempt at lying. He took this moment to contemplate what to say to his long-time best friend. The list in the journal in his hand was echoing in his head.

Don’t let anyone know about my... situation.

He couldn’t tell him about May, at all.

Don’t hurt anyone else.

He couldn’t worry him and be an even bigger burden that he already was. Peter had been a shitty friend to Ned for a long time now, he had to agree. Ned was right, he hadn’t talked to him in a long time now, even before the ferry incident, just because he was so conceited and busy with all the things going on in his life.

But, on the other hand, Ned deserved to know at least something. He couldn’t keep hiding everything from him forever. With this thought, Peter looked up and lightly shoved him a bit so that they weren’t standing smack in the middle of the hallway for everyone to listen to them.

“Uhm.. Mr. Stark, he-he took my suit.”

There, he said it. As much as he could tell him anyway.

“W-What?!” Ned whisper-shouted.

Peter explained it to him in short the ferry incident and Mr. Stark’s reaction (leaving out the bits that stung the most). He left out May from all of it for obvious reasons.

“So, what are you gonna do now man? Is- Is the bird guy still out there?”

Peter sighed, “Yeah. I can’t really find anything on him and I haven’t patrolled in a while either,” he said honestly.

“I’ll help you,” Ned stated, shrugging casually.

Peter looked at him in surprise. He had expected pity, concern, him behaving like Peter was made of glass or something. Something he definitely did not want.

“W-What?”

“I’ll help you,” he repeated, “I don’t know why you didn’t tell me sooner man, I always have your back, you know that. And I know that you’re not gonna back down, are you?”

“No... No, I’m not backing down but I’ve got nothing on him, no information, nothing,” Peter explain as his breathing picked up a little.

“That’s okay! Hey, we just gotta think through this okay,” Ned spoke in a gentle voice, “Take it step by step, alright?”

Peter nodded shakily.

“So, what’s the first thing on the list?” Ned asked.

Peter’s grip on the journal he was holding tightened. He looked back up at his friend and the hope in his heart glowed again. He felt like he wasn’t all alone, in a very long time. He still had to be careful of not hurting him but for now, it felt nice to tell him part of Peter’s truth.

“The webshooters.”

--

In the next few days, Peter and Ned were almost finished with the webshooters in their robotics lab period and some web fluid in chemistry lab instead of doing the actual class work. Things were going well, Peter told himself. Him and Ned were talking more again, and the conversations about Star Wars didn’t seem like much, but they helped Peter in distracting himself from everything else going on in his life.

Peter was doing his best at making his funds last, he still had \$32 left, after spending on food and supplies like toothpaste, which was probably more than he should have had. But, Peter couldn’t get himself to eat more than one meal a day because of the guilt that settled in his stomach if he did. The constant stream of thought telling him that he was wasting money would overpower his growling stomach. The prospect that he was going to have to look for more places to work very soon was daunting. He had already covered every store in Queens and some of New York, and he didn’t know how much this money will last and...

Thinking about food was to go down a spiral of worrying to the point of not being able to breathe so Peter just avoided it.

His new jacket treated him well most nights but other nights he woke up shivering from the cold wind bustling in the alley. The sleep deprivation mixed in with the general exhaustion was enough to make him fall asleep during classes and earn detentions. Earlier, Peter would have freaked out about his transcript for college showing detentions but now, Peter just treated school as a place where he was warm and a detention meant he didn’t have to go back to the alley or the backalley of Starbucks to research and fail on finding anything on illegal weapons.

But still, things were going well. At least that is what Peter kept telling himself, that he was making progress even if he couldn’t see it now, he’s one step closer to everything being okay. Peter was desperately waiting for it to be okay. Because it wasn’t. Because Peter hated himself. He hated how he had hurt May and Mr. Stark, hated that he wasn’t even good enough to find a job, hated that he was slacking off in school, that he ate too much, spent too much. That he didn’t *do enough*.

The guilt in his gut prompted him to go to his Physics teacher to ask for extra credit assignments to make up for all the detentions he had gotten from him. His teacher had sighed wistfully, thinking that Peter must have found some bad company that influenced the top student in his class for the worst. Lucky for Peter, his teacher was a sucker for second chances or well.. eighth chances because he agreed to give him some extra assignments he could complete.

Internally celebrating this small victory, he walked to his next class with a hall pass for being a little late. That’s when he saw Liz casually walking over in the hallway. Peter swallowed and slowed down.

“I thought you had calculus fifth period,” Peter said, trying to sound casual but internally debilitating if the question made him sound like a stalker.

“Just doing some homecoming stuff...” she trailed off.

Right, homecoming was this Saturday, just one more day to go, and Liz was heading the organizing committee. Peter looked at Liz and knew it was his only chance at saying what he had wanted to to her. The extra credit assignment made him feel like he was finally back on track with getting his life together and couldn’t have this one good thing for himself?

“I... I just wanted to apologize about the whole Decathlon thing,” he started.

“It’s fine,” she cut him off, “Last week, Decathlon was the most important thing but then... I almost died so,” she shrugged.

“No-I-Well, I,” Peter sighed and looked down at his shoes, mustering up the courage to just say it, “I just mean that it was not cool especially,” Peter looked up, “because,” *just say it, just say it*, “I know it meant a lot to you.”

Peter finished and his heart sank. Liz frowned a little, as if she had expected him to say something else.

She pushed her hair behind her ear, “Well, I gotta go finish the decor. I’ll see you around on the big night, then?”

“Y-Yeah, I don’t know if I’ll come,” Peter said shakily, “my aunt has a... thing. But yeah, I hope you have fun you know, at the party with your friends a-and your date,” Peter finished his rambling weakly.

“I don’t have a date,” she said with a soft smile, “I was so busy planning it I never really got around to that part.”

Ask her.

“Right well,” Peter pursed his lips and bit his tongue to stop himself from releasing the tears that were on the verge of spilling, “I’ll see you around,” he said quickly and rushed as subtly as he could to the nearest washroom, not looking back to see her again.

As soon as he had locked himself in one of the bathroom stalls, Peter slumped down, not caring about the floor being dirty and rested his head on the door of the stall. He closed his eyes as the tears quietly escaped and made their way down Peter’s face. Peter felt hollow. He didn’t have any energy to sob or to let it out because at this moment, he felt utterly empty and numb.

How could he had asked her to Homecoming? How could he have told her he liked her?

Peter was... he was homeless. He flinched even thinking about the word. But, it was true. He didn’t have a home, his aunt, his only family left in the world hated him so much that she couldn’t bear the thought of living with him. He had lost all the good things because he fucked up. He didn’t *deserve them*.

He didn’t deserve Liz.

How would he even get a suit? Or a corsage? Or a ride to the party?

Peter opened his eyes and laughed bitterly.

Only you Peter Parker, he thought, *you and that damned Parker luck.*

He looked at the time and saw that he had already missed more than half of his class. So much for getting his life together. His low attendance was sure to not look great on his record. Such a failure. Failure at being Spiderman and now failure at being Peter Parker.

Peter's head pounded with a headache as he gripped it tight trying to control the blinding pain.

Useless, failure, disgrace, disappointment

I wanted you to be better.

But how?! How was he supposed to do that? Peter's breathing had picked up and he had resorted to whispering out numbers to count the seconds so he could inhale and exhale in rhythm. It took close to twenty minutes to finally clear his head enough to the point where his brain didn't feel like it was on fire with the million thoughts and his chest didn't feel like it had a hundred ton weight on it. The whole episode had left Peter exhausted.

Be better, Mr. Stark had told him. His clear head made him realize there was only one way to do that: go back to the basics.

--

By the time the sun was about to set, Peter found himself perched on the rooftop of a skyscraper, looking down at the city of Queens bustling beneath him.

This is it, he thought, this is exactly what he needed to do.

Somehow, sitting there in his ratty, thrifted suit feeling the familiar gust of wind against his body made his stomach churn. Protect the little guy, that's what it all had been about. This was the only way he wouldn't be useless anymore. But then why did it feel so... wrong?

Peter shrugged away the feeling. Now with his webshooters ready, he can help people again. He had already wasted too much time in getting the webshooters ready, had already missed the chance to save so many people. He had been such a fucking disappointment.

No, Peter was not feeling anger and frustration rush through his bones because he couldn't ask Liz out, couldn't make it up to May, couldn't be a good student or a good friend, couldn't be a normal teenager. That was not what this was about, not at all.

With no Karen to tell him about any crimes taking place, Peter had to resort to waiting and watching from the tops of buildings for close to an hour but when he saw a couple of people run out of a local grocery store, screaming, he knew it was time for action. He swung his way into the store and quickly analyzed the situation. The guy running the cash register was at gunpoint, there were two armed men wearing ski masks and two civilians- a mom and her daughter- who must have been standing in line to get their stuff checked out, also at gunpoint by robber number 2.

Peter webbed the first guy and dragged him towards himself only to jump up and kick him in the face, sending him flying into the tower of paper rolls. The second guy, alarmed at Spiderman's sudden entry abandoned the woman and her daughter who ran what Peter assumed to be the exit door. The cash register too started to make a run for it just as the second robber tried to land a punch on Peter. His spidey senses seemed to be fueled by adrenaline and helped him block the hits and finally grab the guy's hand to pin him to the ground, hopefully knocking him out.

Just when Peter thought he was in the clear, he felt hot pain burst through his lower back causing him to release a painful groan.

Correction to self, there were three armed robbers.

Peter turned around to face the third robber who held a bloody knife and punched him straight in the face. He stumbled a bit but charged at him again with an extended arm which Peter grabbed a hold of and used to put him in a chokehold.

“Let go of him, or they both die!” came a sound behind Peter.

He saw the first guy he had pushed digging a gun into the woman’s temple. He grabbed the little girl’s hair with his free hand, making her shiver with fear and pain.

The sight took Peter off guard and the robber in Peter’s hold took this opportunity to slide down and dig his knife into Peter’s shin. Peter let out a groan of pain as he slumped downwards. The robbers let go of the woman and headed towards the cash register to grab the money.

The pain from the fight made everything move in a bit of slow motion. He looked up to see the woman standing frozen in fear, gripping her daughter tight, looking at the two men grabbing the money and waking up the third guy to run away. Peter was just an onlooker.

Useless.

He looked down at his blood covered hands and the torn fabric showing him a deep cut. Everything swam around in his vision, the lack of blood making it hard to focus on anything. Between the blurry vision he saw the distorted face of one of the men who had removed his mask and was laughing at him, mocking him, before him and the rest of the robbers ran from the store just in time for the distant sound of sirens making its way.

Peter got up, somehow. He had to get out of here.

“Don’t tell anyone,” Peter whispered to the shaking woman as she vigorously nodded back.

Just as the police entered the scene, Spiderman slipped out the back entrance and half walked, half limped back to his alley where everything turned dark.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading!!

a hint for next chapter... homecoming!

please let me know your thoughts through the comments!
and thank you for your support, as always <3

i was going to make this chapter longer but i didnt so next chapter is gonna be LONG,
hope you stick around!

get ready for some punches and kicks, and ofcourse, we're one step closer to mr. stark
:)

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

it's homecoming baby

Chapter Notes

okay first things first, huge shoutout to flashgirl for pointing out that the man peter borrows money from in the parking lot is called aaron davis, not alex davis.

(so sorry for the error guys!)

disclaimer for violence and angst!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Peter awoke with a piercing pain in his leg and lower back. He didn't know how long it had been since he collapsed in the alley but judging from the sun occasionally peering through the grey clouds, he guessed it must have been afternoon.

It took several painful groans and a whole lot of maneuvering to sit up and lean against the wall of the alley. Peter was sweating and had started to shiver slightly, he knew it wasn't normal but his head was still swimming around a bit to focus on anything. After a few moments, Peter rolled up his trouser leg to inspect the cut on his leg. It had stopped bleeding, but it wasn't healed as it normally would be with his healing factor, but it was not something to worry too much about.

The cut on his torso though, was another matter. Peter painfully lifted his hoodie, flinching when the fabric brushed against the wound and gasped at the sight of the red, inflamed wound. Peter felt a stab of pain just looking at it and his breathing quickened. He quickly dropped the fabric again and closed his eyes, a few tears escaping from his eyes from the pain. Just from the pain.

Peter was not crying because he had just failed. Again. Failure, useless, disappointment.

Peter didn't have the energy to ignore these thoughts anymore, didn't have the will or right mind to not make his mind go to Ben.

Ben.

May was right in kicking him out, of course she was. He had failed to save Ben even with his powers. Then what were his powers good for? It didn't matter that it had been only 2 days since he had gotten bit, didn't matter that he didn't understand what was going on with his body and he was scared. So scared and alone. He couldn't tell anyone, he didn't want to get in trouble or worse, get them in trouble. He didn't know how to control the million different sensory inputs that sent him into a frenzy several times a day where he had to lock himself in the room and sob into his arms for hours on end. He didn't know about the web fluid or his super strength or... anything. But that doesn't matter.

He should've saved Ben.

He should've stopped that robbery today.

But he couldn't. He didn't.

How fucking useless.

Peter blinked through the tears and the blinding pain that he felt and took out his journal. The journal had become his only source of distraction most days he had been on the street. He didn't want to waste the battery on the phone and didn't have any other means of entertainment (nor should he have, he reminded himself) so Peter often resorted to writing in his journal. It proved to be a good distraction. Sometimes he wrote about his day, other times when he was desperate to just write anything, he would simply write about the things he could see around him to keep his hands moving and himself grounded to reality. There were also the times when Peter wrote about Mr. Stark or May but he would never tell anyone that. That was a secret only for him to know about.

The pen shook in his trembling hand as Peter started writing in the least eloquent way possible. He didn't care though, he just wanted to divert his energy to not thinking about the pain.

Saturday

Stab wound. Infected.

In alley, no medicine. No school today.

Homecoming night.

Liz. Didn't ask Liz. Couldn't ask Liz to the dance.

Peter shut his eyes tightly, a different kind of pain blooming in his chest. He continued writing.

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry May.

I'm sorry Mr. Stark. I'm sorry for being useless and causing you trouble.

Please forgive me, Mr. Stark I don't think I can do this anymore.

Peter was crying now, unable to control his tears. He just wanted it to be over. All of it. He couldn't do it anymore, he couldn't, he couldn't.

He wiped his tears and quickly striked through the last few sentences. He couldn't sound so weak to Mr. Stark, not even in his journal. His hand was now lying limp as he slumped down the the ground, now lying down. He couldn't write anymore. He couldn't do anything, so Peter just tried his best to ignore the pain and welcomed the darkness.

When Peter awoke for the second time in the day, he was feeling significantly better than before. But that was only on a relative scale, his back still felt like it was on fire but the weird discharge that had been oozing from the wound had reduced now. Peter's phone had little charge left in it but it was enough to last him till tomorrow when he could charge it in the local library. He checked the time, 7:32 p.m.

Homecoming had started half an hour ago but most of the people were still yet to arrive. Fashionably late, as Ned called it.

Liz.

What Peter was doing 30 minutes later was not rational and Peter knew that. He knew that watching your long time crush's front door from the bushes was the sign of being a creepy stalker. He knew that to just want to see a glimpse of her was totally ridiculous. He knew that.

Yet, here he was. He didn't know what prompted him to come, but something in his gut had told him that he just needed to see her. See what he had lost, perhaps. He hadn't just lost her, no. Liz represented something bigger. He was reminded of the night before Decathlon when she had invited him to go swimming. He felt a familiar feeling now as he had felt when he sat in his suit, watching his friends and Liz play in the pool. Watching what could have been, but wasn't.

He could've been a normal teenager. But here he was, alone, hurt and in pain, watching from the sidelines.

His stream of thought was broken when he saw the front door open to show Liz in a magenta dress. *She looked beautiful*, Peter thought. She smiled gracefully as she walked down the steps from her porch. Alone.

So she hadn't gotten another date after all. Peter couldn't explain why he felt just a little happy knowing that.

She tucked her hair behind her ear and turned to look behind her as another figure emerged from the door.

Peter's heart stopped beating for a second.

It was him.

He was laughing and walking down the same steps with another woman bidding the two goodbye from the door.

He was... He was Liz's dad?!

Peter's heartbeat quickened. No, no, no, this is crazy. This is now how it was supposed to go. What the hell?!

The frenzy of thoughts was once again broken by the car whirring into action. Peter, at once, stepped into action and started sprinting towards the school, the pain from his wound present but actively forgotten.

He reached in time to see the car pulling towards the school gates where it stopped. Both of them got out of the car and the bird man guy leaned on the car door and held Liz's hand. Peter took this opportunity to run stealthily towards the car and crouch on the opposite side of where they were stood.

"It looks great in there sweetie," Peter heard Toomes' rough voice say, "you did a great job organizing all of this."

"Thanks Dad," Liz said and went to hug him. "Promise you'll be back soon from your business trip?"

"Anything for you," Toomes said.

Business trip? It had to be a weapons deal and Toomes was going there now. This was Peter's

chance. Peter thought on his toes and stealthily opened the door of the car and slipped his phone inside. He ran back to the bushes and saw the car make its way out of the school parking lot.

He had to find Ned. He rushed inside the venue at full speed, getting looks from some of his classmates. On locking his eyes on his best friend, Peter yelled, “Ned!”

Ned looked towards Peter but so did Liz and her friends who had just arrived.

“Peter?” Liz said, walking towards him, “I thought you weren’t coming...”

“I-I-I wasn’t, I-” Peter stuttered.

“If you didn’t want to come with me you could’ve just said it, you know,” she said softly.

“No, no, no, Liz. It wasn’t like that, I just-” Peter started out. He was going to give her another lie. But he couldn’t.

“I’m sorry,” he finally said in a weak voice, “You don’t deserve this.”

You don’t deserve someone like me.

With this thought he ran out of the hall again, with Ned following behind him.

“What was that all about? What’re you doing here Peter, I thought you had a thing with May?” Ned hit him with all his questions.

He turned around to face him when he was finally in the hallway.

“Ned, listen to me, I don’t have a lot of time to explain. You have to track my phone, I put it in Liz’s car. Liz’s dad is the Vulture. He’s going to make a weapons deal and I have to stop him,” Peter stated as clearly as he could.

“W-What? What?!” Ned blabbered as he looked at Peter with wide eyes.

“Ned,” Peter called out to make the boy focus on him, “I need my guy in the chair. Call Mr. Stark and Happy Hogan, he’s Mr. Stark’s Head of Security.”

Something in Ned’s mind clicked as he understood immediately. He handed his best friend his phone.

“I’ll track your phone from the lab and call you. Go get em’, Spiderman.”

He didn’t have to say more as Peter quickly changed into his already a bit damaged suit and mask in his backpack and in a matter of seconds he was flying out the door, landing onto an expensive sports car that was just about to enter the parking lot.

Peter’s eyes widen when he sees who was sitting in the driver’s seat.

“Flash,” Peter said, making his voice deliberately deep, “I need your car.”

“Well, Sir, technically this is my dad’s car and-”

His stuttering was cut down by Spiderman staring down at him and him abandoning it in a second.

In a ridiculous turn of events, Peter found himself driving a Mercedes that he had just stolen (ahem, borrowed) from his long time bully. But Peter didn’t have time to think about any of this as he

speeded along the roads of Queens, asking Ned to pull the specs of the car to turn on the headlights.

“So where is my phone now?” he asked frantically.

“Um...” came Ned’s voice through the phone, “It has stopped in an old industrial park in Brooklyn.”

“What? That makes no sense, I thought he was going out of town!”

“Weird. Oh, I reached Mr. Happy, don’t think he likes you by the way, it sounded like he was catching a flight. He said something about taking off in nine minutes-”

“What?!”

“He was surrounded by a bunch of boxes.”

“Boxes?” Peter asked. Oh. Oh. “It’s moving day. It’s moving day!”

Toomes wasn’t going to sell weapons, he was going to make more.

“He’s gonna rob that plane. I gotta stop him!” Peter revved the engine and speeded through the roads with a newfound determination in his heart.

He had to stop them.

“Okay, slow down. It’s on your right, turn right. Turn right now!” Ned yelled through the phone frantically.

Peter could barely register the instruction before he webbed a pole and skidded right, causing the car to tumble and his the seat to press painfully into his wound, making him yell out in pain. After what seemed like too long, the car finally stopped tumbling and came to a halt.

“Peter, are you okay?” Ned asked, concerned.

“Yeah,” he whispered out, closing his eyes in pain. It felt like a heavy weight was sitting on Peter’s chest, restricting his breaths. He had to keep going. Peter ripped the mask off his face, unable to breathe properly. “Just keep trying to get through to Happy,” he finally stated as he mustered the strength to jump out of the car, ignoring the pain.

“It’s been an honor, Spiderman,” Ned said.

Peter nodded. It was up to him now. He walked into the warehouse with steady steps.

“Hey!” he yelled out when he saw Toomes’ figure working with some tools. Peter was too angry, too frustrated to be stealthy.

“I’ve got you, it’s over,” Peter yelled, “Surprised?”

Toomes turned around to face him casually, “So you’re Spiderman?” he asked with a smirk on his face, “A kid, seriously?”

Peter didn’t respond.

“Wait, wait, wait,” Toomes continued, “I’ve seen you somewhere.”

“You-You’re in Liz’s Decathlon teams, aren’t ya? You were in the state level championship

picture, I've got you hanging on my fridge. What was it, what was it, Paxton?"

"Peter," he stated.

"Peter! That's it! Liz told me about you, I see why she likes you," he said.

Peter repressed the thought that sprung wanting to ask him what Liz had said about him.

"How could you do this to her?" Peter asked.

"To her?" Toomes asked, "I'm not doing anything to her, Pete. I'm doing this for her."

"You know, I really admire your grit," he continued, "I really do. Even after you killed a shipload of people, here you are once again."

Peter tried not to think of the ferry, of Mr. Stark. Instead, he webbed Toomes' hand to the desk he was leaning on.

Toomes sighed. "Peter, you're young. You don't understand how the world works."

"Yeah, but I understand that selling weapons to criminals is *wrong*."

"How do you think your buddy Stark paid for that tower? Or any of his little toys?" Toomes retorted back, "Those people up there, the rich and the powerful, Mr. Tony Stark, they don't care about us. I know you know what I'm talking about."

Peter swallowed. "Why are you telling me this?" he asked.

"Because I want you to understand," Toomes stated.

"And... I needed a little time to get her airborne."

A loud blast behind Peter made him duck as the Vulture's wings flew above him, going straight through the concrete pillars holding up the roof. The wings circled back at Peter as he continually dodged it.

"I'm sorry Peter," came Toomes' voice.

"What are you talking about, that thing hasn't even touched me yet!" Peter yelled back.

"True. Then again, wasn't really trying to."

In a matter of seconds, Peter felt like the whole world had dropped on him as he got crushed with no time to register what had happened. The pain piercing through his back was now long forgotten as his whole body now felt like it had been broken piece by piece. Peter was vaguely aware that he was still breathing still alive, as he gasped in panic at what had happened.

A building had just fallen on him.

A building.

Peter breathed heavily, "Oh god," he groaned out. He had to get out of here. Trapped, trapped. He pushed against the heavy weight on top of him, yelling through the piercing pain that rushed through him. Nothing moved even an inch even through the effort he was putting.

Peter felt exhausted. He hadn't eaten a thing since two days and couldn't remember when he had had a full meal. His body felt limp and tired. He couldn't do this, he was just so tired.

God, he was tired. And he wasn't getting out of here and he was going to die. He was going to die trapped here, all alone. He was never going to complete that list. He was never going to make it up to Mr. Stark. Never apologize to May or take Liz to another school dance or complete another LEGO set with Ned.

Peter was never going to go to college. Or graduate high school.

Peter was going to die here. All alone. But that wasn't the worst part.

He was going to die a failure. He was going to die having been useless.

Useless fucking disappointment.

Peter cried. He couldn't do anything else so he just cried. Cried about May, cried about being alone, cried because he was gonna be stuck here until someone found him, which could take days, weeks. What if someone never found him? What would someone who found him, think about him?

A kid wearing a ridiculous Spiderman outfit.

Just a kid, without his suit. A useless kid.

If you're nothing without the suit, then you shouldn't have it.

Mr. Stark's voice rang in his head all of a sudden.

I wanted you to be better.

Be better. This was it. Peter had to be better.

“Come on, Peter,” he whispered to himself.

“Come on, Spiderman.” One more time, shakily.

“Come on, Spiderman.” Stronger now.

Peter grunted as he yelled out in pain and put every bit of strength in his body to lift up the heavy block of cement on his back. *Come on, Spiderman. Come on, Spiderman.*

Something was moving. It was happening. It was happening! After a few more moments of pushing with all his might, Peter finally felt the heavy weight left from his weight, allowing him to stand up shakily.

He had to move fast, the plane must be leaving anytime now. Moving out of the building, he saw the Vulture perched on a billboard, with his eyes set on the plane that was just taking flight.

If someone was to ask Peter after this mess was over what happened, he could only remember it in flashes.

--

Peter was dangling from the Vulture using his webs. His heart was beating rapidly, images of the time he was at this height and dropped into the hudson flashing in his mind. He hadn't slept for days after that, because if he did he would wake up feeling tangled in the ropes of his parachute, unable to come up for air. He can see the city and traffic being reduced to a conglomeration of small glittering lights. Peter ignored the traumatic memory and the fact that he could fall now and have no one, no parachute or tracker in his suit, to save him.

--

Peter was trying to keep his grip on the plane as he watched Vulture enter the plane using the matter shifter thingy he used on the truck in Washington. The wind, the cold, the height, it was all too much. He had to get a plan, he had to remove the Vulture's suit from where it was attached on the plane. He can't let him escape.

--

The suit was off, but the Vulture must have seen he was there because he was trying to escape in the suit. Peter tried to keep his grip on the plane when he suddenly let out a yell of surprise when he saw the sharp wings of the Vulture tear into the surface of the plane above him. He was escaping. No, no, no, Peter thought as he webbed him and pulled him backwards, making him get one of the wings stuck in the engine of the plane and fall off as a consequence.

"I can't believe that worked!" Peter yelled, as he gripped the engine himself. In a second, the engine itself dislodged from the plane, making Peter yell in surprise. With great effort, he managed to grip the plane again, letting the engine fall to the ground.

--

The Vulture was back on the plane, and he was angry. He managed to push Peter off the plane till he was just dangling from it using his webs. The plane was losing altitude. It's going down. Peter groaned with effort and pulled himself back up only to make his heart sink. The plane is going to go down.

And it's gonna hit the city.

--

It was turning. The plane was turning! He pulled the web attached to the wing of the plane tighter. "Please turn," he yelled to himself.

Suddenly, the web snapped, hurtling Peter backward, leaving him desperately gripping the wing of the plane.

He could see the ground fast approaching. Could hear his own screams and the painful screech of the malfunctioning airplane. Before Peter could prepare himself, there was a loud crash.

Touchdown.

--

There was fire and there was pain. The plain hurtled on the beach making Peter lose his grip on the wing and painfully crash into the ground. After skidding on the ground both Peter and the plane came to a halt. Peter couldn't move, he felt like he was dying. His senses were out of control. He couldn't move.

He had to move. He had to get up.

--

He saw it before he heard it. In a second, the Vulture crashed into Peter.

Peter got back up, preparing to strike before he was caught by surprise once again. The Vulture dug the sharp talons into Peter's chest, making him scream out in pain.

After that, the fight passed by in a blur. Peter was just a puppet at the mercy of the Vulture. One moment, the flying man threw Peter upwards. The next, he was repeatedly dropped painfully to the ground, bashing his face in.

--

The pain had become too unbearable. Darkness was overtaking his vision. But somehow, Peter managed to open his eyes to see the Vulture gripping one of the containers that was in the plane.

He was carrying it upwards, preparing to fly with it completely oblivious to the dangerous sparks flying from his wingsuit.

“Your wingsuit is gonna explode!” Peter yelled at him in realisation, shooting a web at the container, trying to pull him to the ground.

But Toomes ignored his warning, slicing the web with his sharp wings.

--

A loud explosion followed by a crash. It had exploded.

“No,” Peter whispered to himself.

He couldn’t let someone, *anyone* die, on his watch. Let alone Liz’s dad.

With this thought he pushed himself to stand even though every part of his body was screaming in pain. He couldn’t let him die.

--

The fire was all around him and his mind was not working anymore.

All Peter knew was that he had rescued Toomes and tied him up to one of the boxes on the beach.

The smoke was overwhelming and he couldn’t breathe deep enough. His upper body had too many deep cuts to count and the coppery smell of blood was overpowering his senses.

He looked down at the man tied up with a note beside his face one last time before he took off.

Peter didn’t know where he was going. Back to his alley, he supposed. There was no place else to go anyway.

In Peter’s defence he did make it halfway. Or maybe not, Peter’s navigation skills were not really working. His vision was blurry and he could not breathe because his lungs felt like they were on fire.

Somewhere between the beach and his alley, Peter stumbled into an unknown back lane and couldn’t go any farther as his mind went blank and his vision blacked out.

--

May found herself in Peter’s bedroom tonight. She hadn’t entered his room ever since he... left. But tonight...

She had found out from somewhere that tonight was homecoming. Ever since she got home, she had just been snuggled up in his bed, unable to control her sobs.

She had missed the opportunity to teach him how to dance, give him advice on asking a girl out, buying him a corsage, learning how to tie a tie together... She couldn't do any of those things with him and it made her heart hurt.

God, she missed him. She missed him so, so much. May had been pretty much a zombie the last couple of weeks Peter had not been here. But today, her emotions let loose as she cried her heart out. It was now late in the night, much later than Peter's bedtime. Was he asleep, May thought. Was he safe?

Where was he?

Why didn't he come back?

May shook her head at this... Why did she kick him out?

Ben's face popped up in May's minds as she buried her face into the pillows to ignore the painful thought. In doing so, May's arm brushed against something hard beneath the pillows.

She moved the pillows in confusion only to find one of Peter's notebooks tucked securely beneath them. She picked it up and sat up to open it only to find herself gasping in surprise.

Thursday

I don't know what's happening to me. May is a mess. I am a mess.

I got bit. Everything hurts. Hands shaking. Fever. Vomiting. Can't focus.

I can't do this. Everything is too loud. I can smell everything, hear everything. I can feel everything touching me. Everything hurts.

My body feels like it's on fire. My ears feel like they're bleeding. I can't eat. I can't sleep.

Ben is dead. Ben is dead. Ben died yesterday.

He was right there in front of me. He was bleeding. I couldn't do anything. Everything hurt too much.

Smell of blood too strong. Couldn't focus. Couldn't catch the robber. Couldn't save Ben.

May is not doing well. I can't help her. Can't go out of the room. Too bright, too loud, too much.

May closed the notebook suddenly, unable to breathe through her sobs. She couldn't believe it. Her baby was in so much pain. She had thought he was just grieving when he wouldn't come out of the room. She could never have imagined that...

Her curiosity got the better of her as she wiped her tears and opened the notebook again.

Monday

I can't sleep at night. It's only been a couple of weeks since Ben...

And I can't sleep. May looks broken every time I see her. She tries to be strong for me, tries to put on a mask but I can see right through it. With everything that is going on... I just can't seem to help her. I want to help her.

My senses are a little but in control now. It seems like after the bite, everything is dialled to eleven.

I can sense things before they happen. It's weird. I haven't told anyone yet. I don't want to tell anyone.

I'm scared.

What can I even tell them? I have no idea what's happening with me. What if someone gets me arrested? I can't leave May.

I can hear things that are happening miles away. Last night I heard May sobbing in her room. She was talking to Ben, I think. She said, "What if Peter leaves me too? I'll be all alone, Ben."

I won't leave May. No matter what happens. I won't leave her.

I just have to figure out what's happening with me. I'll try and be strong for her.

I'll try my best.

May choked on her sobs, too many emotions bubbling in her heart but one thought overpowered all others.

She had to find her boy.

In the darkness of the night, May jumped into action. She couldn't find him alone so she reached for her phone, dialling the only number she knew could help.

--

It was after dinner that Tony had gotten a call from Happy notifying that his plane had crashed.

“What do you mean it *crashed*?” Tony asked in a sharp tone.

“It means it crashed onto the beach, Boss,” Happy’s voice came through the phone.

“And would you mind explaining how a state-of-the-art Stark Industries aircraft managed to make an emergency landing without anyone knowing?”

“It was the flying Vulture guy,” Happy stated with a hint of sadness and frustration in his tone.

Tony’s heart sank.

Stay away from the flying Vulture guy. His own words rang in his head.

“Is he in custody?” he asked, already expecting the answer he was about to get.

“Yeah. Found him tied up,” Happy said in a softer voice than usual, “by Spiderman.”

Tony knew it. His mind whirred into action as he stepped outside his lab, making his way to the car.

“Is the kid there?” Tony asked, suppressing the crack in his voice that accompanied the million thoughts in his head telling him something was *wrong*.

“He’s nowhere to be found, Boss,” Happy said.

Tony didn’t respond as he strapped himself in the car.

“It looks bad Boss, the kid couldn’t have gotten out of this without a scratch...” Happy trailed off.

“Happy, we need the mess on the beach cleaned up as soon as possible. I’m on my way there. Find the kid,” he commanded as he pushed the gas pedal and speeded out of the compound at Happy’s confirmation.

He couldn’t have gone far, he told himself. That’s what he hoped anyway.

It took a while to get to the location Happy had sent but when he did, his heart beat rapidly. The scene before him was way worse than he had imagined. There was a long trail of the debris all along the coast line with fire burning at the very end where he guessed the plane had come to a halt. There was smoke everywhere and the whole city’s fire brigades and police cars seemed to have come to the scene.

Tony was looking for just one man though and as soon as he got out of the car, he saw Happy making his way towards him.

“What’s the update on the kid?” Tony asked immediately.

“We did a perimeter search and found nothing. His phone is switched off. Tried calling that Ned guy without giving too much away but he hasn’t heard from him either.”

Tony’s heart sank at the disappointing response from Happy. He would be lying if he said he wasn’t worried for the kid. He had just fought a Vulture guy in a high-tech wingsuit without his own suit. That too, just to save Tony’s stuff from getting into the wrong hands. He had to make sure he was okay.

“Did you call his Aunt?” Tony asked.

“Figured not to, Boss. Considering she doesn’t know about this whole... Spiderman thing. Wouldn’t exactly rub her the right way if I called asking for her nephew in the middle of the night,” Happy explained.

Tony nodded. He had to call May herself, make it sound casual. If he knew anything about the kid, he knew he would try to hide anything that happened from his Aunt. Maybe he had sneaked back into his place. He just had to confirm it with May, he had to.

He pulled out his phone and just as he was about to dial her number, he saw May’s number pop up on his screen.

This was... *odd*.

May had never called him before. Had she found out? Was Peter there? Was he okay?

He ignored the questions popping in his head as he picked up the phone.

“Mr. Stark,” he heard May’s weak voice, as if she had been crying, “I need your help finding Peter. He’s been missing for the past few weeks and I kicked him out and I don’t know where he is and-”

“Whoa, slow down, slow down May,” Tony cut off her rambling.

“Peter’s missing, Tony. We need to find him,” May said in as clear as a voice as she could muster.

Tony gripped his phone tight as he looked at the burning debris before him with one thought running in his mind.

Where are you, kid?

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading!!

see! I promised you this chapter was gonna be LONG.

AND AND i wrote it in just one day so i'm sure there must be typos and i'll get to them but i just HAD to write this as soon as a i could and post it because i could NOT WAIT.

i hope you're liking it so far- please let me know your thoughts through the comments!!

and thank you for your support!

get ready for some irondad feels, guys! the wait is almost over!!

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

peter's journal and his intrusive thoughts

Chapter Notes

warning: heavy angst, self-harming thoughts and just in general, a lil bit of a heavy chapter! take care of yourselves <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tony hung up on May's rambling as soon as he got the fact that the kid was not at home. He hadn't been in his home for weeks now. Where the hell was he?

He didn't waste any time in instructing Happy in getting the full story from May while he himself slipped into his upgraded suit.

"Okay Fri," he said in as steady a voice as he could, "I need cameras in a 15 mile radius run a face recognition of the kid, asap." Thousands of screens flashed in front of his eyes as one of the camera screens locked onto a face that looked 93% like Peter's.

93% was good enough for him.

"Lock the location, Fri," Tony said as he boosted off the ground, aiming for the street where Fri had located Peter. In a matter of a few minutes, he had reached a dark street not too far away from the scene of the plane crash.

"Where are you kid?" Tony whispered to himself.

"This is where the cameras caught him last, boss," Fri's voice popped up, "engaging thermal view. Checking the back alleys is recommended."

Tony waved off a quick thanks as he made his way to the back lane which had two huge dumpsters covering most of the space. With the thermal view though, Tony was able to see the heat signature of a body behind the dumpsters. His breath caught in his throat as he disengaged the suit and jogged behind the huge containers.

The scene in front of him made Tony's heart beat rapidly. Peter was laying there, in a small pool of his own blood. His 'suit' was all tattered and Tony couldn't see the kid's face that was pressed against the floor.

He took cautious steps towards the kid and bent down, gently turning him over. The kid was out cold, bruises littered his whole body. There were some deep cuts on his upper body that were bleeding profusely, showing no signs of healing as they previously would have. Tony lightly tapped the kid's cheeks, to watch him wake up, give him some sign of life except the weak pulse

he could feel.

“Peter, hey kid, wake up, come on,” Tony persisted. He was okay, the kid was okay, he had to be. With no signs of consciousness showing, Tony quickly entered the suit and carefully picked up the smaller boy, cautious of not jostling anything. And not a moment later, he was off, wishing, hoping, praying that the kid was okay.

Tony settled in the chair next to the bed. The room was quiet except for the rhythmic beeping of the heart monitor. He looked at the kid who looked so fragile and impossibly small in the large hospital bed and he waited. The beeping made his heart feel a bit steadier acting as a continual reassurance that the kid was alive.

Tony had arrived at the medbay, almost hysterical, calling for every doctor, nurse or staff on duty to report immediately. In less than a second, Peter was out of his arms and on a crash cart on the way to the operation theatre. Tony had felt so... empty. After a few hours, or days, Tony couldn't tell the difference, the doctor had given him a painful list of all the things the kid had suffered. Multiple deep lacerations, a punctured lung, an infected wound from before that had made things worse, bruises..

Sometime before, Happy had come in and told him about Peter's fight with May. May had found out, right after Tony had taken his suit, and she kicked him out for some reason. The kid was on the streets.

God.

If Tony was honest, he didn't know what to think at this moment. When he looked at the kid lying in front of him, he didn't know who to blame or what to do or what to say. He felt helpless, all he could do was wait. Wait for him to wake up, to heal.

Tony leaned back in his chair with a sigh. Something pressed against his back as he leaned back and Tony moved forward to inspect. It was the kid's backpack that had been sitting on the chair that Tony hadn't noticed before. Hee grabbed it out of curiosity and sifted through the contents. There was one thick jacket, a couple of thin sweaters, nothing that could be enough against the cold winter at this time of the year, Tony thought. He found the kid's wallet which had close to \$20 dollars in it and something deep in his chest ached. How did he survive on the streets? Did he have enough money? Did he-

Tony's thoughts came to a halt as he spotted a notebook at the very bottom of the backpack. It must be one of his school notebooks, Tony thought as he flipped through the pages when his name written in it caught his eye. He quickly stopped at that page and read the heading.

Things I would say to Mr. Stark if I ever make it up to him

This wasn't just a notebook for school. Tony flipped to the first few pages and started reading. He had no idea what he was about to find out.

The first page had a list.

Things to do:

Take down the Vulture. Be better for Mr. Stark.

Stay out of May's way. Give her time and space.

Don't let anyone know about my... situation.

Get new webshooters and suit.

Later, in a different ink, another statement was scrawled on in a bigger size than the previous ones.

Don't hurt anyone else.

Tony flipped through to the next page, feeling jittery.

I tried to run away yesterday but the nice man at the bus station told me I had to show I was sorry. He's right. I have to make it up to them. But its hard. And cold. Hands shake too much to write, so will not write much today.

I've found an alley to sleep in. It had cardboard boxes, makes the ground softer.

I was going to tell Ned today but I decided not to. Flash told me that people around me drop like bees. He was right. Everyone close to me has gotten hurt. Or they've been disappointed in me. I almost killed hundreds of people on that ferry.

I don't want to hurt anyone else.

Money left: \$48

Have to figure out how to make money last. Got mugged yesterday- they took about \$50 and broke my webshooters. Didn't eat today, didn't want to waste money. I hope May doesn't tell the school to kick me out. I don't want to drop out of school. Tried studying today but the streetlight keeps flickering. Will wake up early tomorrow to finish Spanish homework.

It's too cold. Need to figure out how to stay warm, can't afford blanket right now. Will have to buy supplies soon

Wednesday

Suit \$13

Laundry detergent \$4

2 sandwiches \$10

Money left- \$21

Research-

Searched all local news websites and crime speculation blogs- nothing on a flying vulture guy

~~Hacked~~ Checked the police server for any reports of underground weapon deals

Went and visited the spot under the bridge where the first deal took place- nothing found.

They've all just disappeared. I can't find anything. How am I supposed to be better if I can't find anything. How am I supposed to do anything?

I don't know how much longer this money will last. Still don't have anything warm, the alley is too cold and too dark. Sometimes even the sound of the wind scares me. Some superhero I am.

Food is hard to come by. Couldn't find anything in the dumpsters tonight or yesterday. Went to the homeless food bank yesterday, they were giving soup. I didn't take any. Felt too guilty. How can I take food meant for people who were helpless ~~when I was kicked out because I'm so unworthy~~ Had to buy a sandwich today. Why did I buy a sandwich. It was so expensive. But I was so hungry.

Stupid. Stupid. Stupid. Shouldn't have bought that sandwich. Should be saving money instead. Stupid. Have to be more careful now.

Got detention today. Couldn't complete Spanish homework the other day, couldn't wake up early because I couldn't sleep at night. Too cold. Finished all homework in detention today and completed research afterwards. This is progress, right?

Why am I writing in this. I have nothing else to do. If I don't write, I think. I don't want to think. I think about all the things I would say to Mr. Stark and May. All the things I'd ask them if I had the chance. I have to earn the chance, I know.

I'm trying.

It's early but I didn't get any sleep last night so I'm going to turn in.

Why am I writing in this. This is so dumb.

Tony flipped the page with his slightly trembling hand.

Can't sleep. The cold hurts. Writing is distracting.

Things I would say to Mr. Stark ~~if I ever make it up to him~~

I didn't mean to hurt anyone, I swear.

I'm sorry I disappointed you... ~~if you had just told me you had informed the FBI~~ It was my fault.

I'm trying to be better. I know you told me not to follow the Vulture but I don't know what else to do.

What did you mean by 'be better'? What do I do Mr. Stark? I don't know what to do, I don't know what to do, I don't know.

I'm really sorry Mr. Stark... I hope you forgive me.

Tony shut the notebook hastily and took a shaky breath in. He couldn't do this, he couldn't do this anymore. He looked up at the kid laying in front of him in a tangle of wires and tubes surrounding him. The beeping of the monitor in the quiet room grounding him to the reality. Peter is alive and breathing.

Uncharacteristically, Tony reached forward and enveloped the kid's cold hand with his warm one. He squeezed Peter's hand lightly, wanting for the kid to reciprocate but with no success. At this point, Tony wasn't sure if he was providing comfort or seeking it. Whatever it may be, the older man kept a steady grip at his kid's hand. It was only after the gentle touch and the beeping sound had grounded and reassured him of the reality that Tony found it in himself to open to notebook again.

Friday

Missed school today, too sick. Must've been the food I found in the dumpster yesterday. Couldn't

get up in the morning so I slept. The sun was out today, it felt nice.

The sun makes me feel like there is hope.

Oh my god, that sentence was so lame.

But its kinda true...

Bought supplies today

1 chicken soup- \$4

2 McDonalds burgers- \$4

Advil- \$5

1 warm jacket (thrifted)- \$7

Money left: \$1

I'm scared. Money is almost all gone. But this jacket is so much more warmer than my hoodie. Almost cried when I wore it. That's so stupid. But it makes me feel warm and safe and-

Had an Advil today. Weird thoughts in my head... wanted to have the whole bottle.

Didn't have the whole bottle.

Will look for a job tomorrow.

The next few pages were filled with lists of different shop names and their descriptions written in an orderly fashion. Besides each of the item in the list though, there was a cross drawn.

Saturday

Visited almost every retail place in Queens. Couldn't find anything.

I'm so tired. Legs hurt from walking. Already finished the burger yesterday. I'm so hungry. I can't spend the last dollar. I'll officially have no money if I spend it. I can't have no money. I'm so stupid.

I'm so tired. With every rejection today, I just wanted to give up. The weird thoughts don't stop. The bottle of Advil is still in my bag. I could have it all

I'm so tired. Why do I keep writing that. I'm just-

I have no one, I can't borrow- Ned, May, Mr. Stark, MJ, Happy....

Except maybe...

Sunday

I got money! Aaron gave me \$50! I can't believe it.

I haven't bought anything yet. I'm so hungry but I can't be as reckless with money as I was before. I have to save it. I have to make it last much longer now. The only alternative to it would be to go job hunting way farther than Queens. Which means I'll have to leave my alley... and would have to walk to school for longer because I can't spend on daily tickets for the train. I hardly get enough

time for homework as is, I don't know how I'd work that out.

Anyway, I'm going to make this money last longer. Maybe till then I'll get a call for a job from one of the places in Queens itself.

Its too cold to write right now.

Monday

I told Ned... I don't know why. But I did. And it felt nice that someone knew.

Tony sighed in relief at this, at least he told someone.

I didn't tell him everything though. Only that Mr. Stark took my suit and I can't Spiderman anymore... and I told him about my research disaster on the Vulture guy.

I didn't tell him about May. Or about living in an alley. I couldn't.

How could I have? I already promised myself that I wouldn't hurt anyone else. Wouldn't be a bother to anyone else like I have been to everyone around me all my life. How can I be better like Mr. Stark wanted if I can't stop being a burden?

Oh God, Tony groaned internally in frustration but kept reading nonetheless.

Thursday

I still have money left. Barely ate. Very hungry. But I can't spend. I won't.

I'm tired. Been getting more detentions lately. Don't have the energy to do homework most days. Stupid. Stupid.

Can't sleep the whole night, too cold. Jacket is not enough. I'm so tired. I don't want to do this anymore. Everything frustrates me, makes me angry.

This alley, school, myself.

That damn bottle of Advil.

I don't even know if it's enough to overdose. There, I said it. Overdose. That's what the bad thoughts say. They say, just take it all and hope you're gone.

I hope I'm gone. I don't want to be here.

But that means I give up on checking off my list. As if I'll ever be able to check it all off anyway.

May kicked me out because I was too much of a coward to save Ben. Because I was too scared of myself when I go my powers that I couldn't even put them to use. Then what use am I of? Why would she ever take me back

Mr. Stark.... I don't want to talk about Mr. Stark.

But I want to ask him. Is this normal Mr. Stark? I'm not injured but my chest hurts whenever I think about the ferry- is that normal? Is it because I'm not eating? Can I have heart problems? Because it really hurts, Mr. Stark. Everything hurts.

I didn't mean to hurt anyone, Mr. Stark. I'm really sorry sir.

I just can't help but think that you would want me to listen to the bad thoughts. Should I take it all. Should I just be gone.

Tony's breathing was haywire at this point and no matter how hard he rubbed his temples with his hands in an attempt to calm down, tears betrayed him and tumbled down his face in a steady stream. He noticed there was only one page left. With shaky hands, he turned to the last words Peter had written in his journal.

Saturday

Stab wound. Infected.

In alley, no medicine. No school today.

Homecoming night.

Liz. Didn't ask Liz. Couldn't ask Liz to the dance.

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry May.

I'm sorry Mr. Stark. I'm sorry for being useless and causing you trouble.

Please forgive me, Mr. Stark I don't think I can do this anymore.

Tony closed the book as if it burnt him and it fell to the ground. His eyes were slightly wide, his hands were shaking. He got up anxiously and looked at the kid again. He walked forward and with a shaky hand, brushed the mess of curls of the boy back and kept his hand cupping his head.

In the quiet room of the hospital, Tony made a promise to the young boy and himself.

I'll take care of you, Peter. I'll be here.

Chapter End Notes

thanks for reading!!

i wanted to give you some more background on peter's thoughts and ofc, irondad had to know what he was gonna have to deal with now- so i give you THIS

and sorry for the long wait, i had to recharge myself by reading a LOT of whump but i'm back nowww. expect the next chapter VERY soon.

as always, please let me know your thoughts through the comments!
and thank you for the support <3

see you soon with more peter&dad interactions!

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

peter wakes up

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The moment was interrupted with Happy opening the door with a creaking noise.

“Kid’s aunt is here, boss,” He said quietly.

Tony didn’t turn around, well aware of the tear tracks on his face. He couldn’t let anyone see him like this. “Yeah, I’ll be right out,” he said, not turning around. Happy knew the man well enough to know that it was his time to leave.

“I’ll be back, kid,” Tony said quietly to the sleeping form in front of him. He didn’t want to leave him at all, he didn’t want to be somewhere where he couldn’t see the kid in front of him. But, he had to deal with the woman on the other side of the door.

May looked awful to say the least. Her hair was in the messiest of buns and she was in sweatpants. When Happy had asked Tony if he should inform the Aunt of Peter’s presence in the Medbay, Tony had waved him off. “Yeah, sure, whatever,” Tony had mumbled, too lost in his anxious thoughts waiting for the doctor to give him the news.

As soon as Tony came out to the door, May stood up from her seat in the waiting room, tear tracks staining her face. When he didn’t say anything, she hesitantly started, “H-How is he?”

“Fine. Dead, alive, how does it matter to you?” Tony snapped.

“That’s not fair,” May said, defensively, emotion thick in her voice.

Tony took a threatening step forward and towered over the small woman with a glare. “Not fair?” Tony made a face, “What’s not fair *May*, is kicking a fifteen year old to the streets with no fucking money, *May*. That’s what’s not fair.”

Happy instinctively stepped forward, ready to make Tony back down if the situation calls for it.

May just looked down at her feet and sobbed.

“What were you thinking?” Tony asked in a quieter voice but just as lethal.

“I,” May started, “I just- he lied to me! He kept so many secrets and- and then I thought about Ben and he couldn’t save Ben an-”

“He was a kid, *May*! He had gotten his powers just a few days before, he was probably out of his mind!” Tony raised his voice.

“I know that!” May yelled.

“I know that now,” she continued, “I read his journal, I didn’t know before, if I had then-”

“Wait- he has another journal?” Tony asked suddenly.

She took a notebook out of her bag and gave it to him without a word. “Wait- Another? He has more?” May asked, confused.

Tony handed, more like shoved, the notebook that was already in his hands.

“Read it,” he simply said to her, trying to keep the emotion out of his voice, and turned around, preparing to go back to the kid’s room not before turning back one last time. “Don’t come back here, May. Not until the kid calls you,” Tony commanded in the same lethal voice.

With that, he turned around and shut the door in May’s face, leaving her to crumple on the ground, sobbing.

And a very uncomfortable looking Happy.

--

Usually, it would be difficult for Tony to sit still for even a second. He always had to be tinkering with something, tapping his fingers on a desk, opening and closing the button on the cuff of his shirt’s sleeve. He was always restless for the next business meeting, the next idea, the next invention. But today, he sat in the chair next to Peter’s bed with a cleared schedule, courtesy of Pepper.

Happy had knowingly informed her of his boss’ state and she had told him that she would be on the next plane over. Tony was told as much but he couldn’t comprehend it very well. His thoughts only focused on the situation at hand.

The debris and remaining surviving equipment from the aircraft had been handled. The Vulture’s trial was scheduled to happen soon, with not much left in his defence. Tony kept checking off these things in the list in his mind and kept coming back to the same pressing concern.

Peter.

At the moment, Tony sat with his head bent, elbows resting on his knees. The doctors had told him it was only a matter of time before Peter woke up and Tony wanted to be there. He had to, he had promised the kid. But he hadn’t imagine the consequences his presence would have.

Peter opened his eyes slowly, trying to focus his vision on something, anything. It took a few blinks for him to realise he was in a room. Everything in his mind was muddled up. He tried turning his head a little to figure out what was happening. The small movement on the bed caused Tony to look up and on registering the fact that Peter was awake, he was on his feet and beside the kid in a second.

“Hey kid,” Tony whispered, brushing the kid’s hair back from his face gently, surprising himself too.

Peter’s eyes slowly focused on Tony’s face and Tony could pinpoint the exact moment when the kid registered who he was because of the spike in the sound of the heart monitor. The beeping became louder and faster, signalling to Tony that Peter was panicking.

“Peter, hey kid, calm down,” Tony tried, trying to sound as gentle as possible.

“I-I-” Peter was trying to say something through his short breaths and with wide eyes, but the oxygen mask on his face was making it harder.

Tony got the message though and carefully moved the oxygen mask on the side, allowing Peter to speak.

“I-I di- hurt- un,” Peter tried again. “I di- me- hurt an-un.”

To anyone else, Peter’s words may seem like gibberish. But Tony, who had just spent the past few hours thinking about the words in Peter’s journal, felt his heart ache in his chest.

Things I would say to Mr. Stark if I ever make it up to him

I didn’t mean to hurt anyone, I swear.

Tony was just about to speak up, to comfort him, tell him he didn’t have to tell Tony that anyway when Peter started coughing, hard. The sound of his coughs and the heart monitor going haywire prompted Tony to hastily press the panic button, sending a stream of doctors into the room and a nurse gently ushering Tony out. The words “cardiac arrest” were among the last he heard before the door to his room was shut on his face.

He was still facing the closed door when he vaguely heard footsteps behind him and a gentle hand landed on his shoulder. Tony turned around wordlessly and melted into Pepper’s arms. She stroked his hair affectionately and didn’t comment when she could feel his tears where his face pressed against her neck.

Happy saw the scene and his heart ached for the older man but he made his way out of the waiting room to give them some space.

“It’s gonna be okay, Tony,” Pepper said in a soft voice. She was surprised to see Tony show her this side of him. Usually she would only ever see a crack in his hard shell after a particularly bad nightmare. But here, seeing him break down over the kid broke Pepper’s heart. She was going to be there for him, she promised herself, like he had been for her so many times before. With this thought in her head, she squeezed Tony a bit tighter, trying to provide all the comfort that she could.

--

The next time Peter woke, Tony was in the same position where he had been before. Only this time, he did not stand up and move to the kid’s side immediately, allowing him the space to wake up fully and without panicking.

He watched anxiously from the seat on the side as Peter blinked a few times to get the room in focus. Finally, he turned his head around to see Tony. Tony sat glued to the chair, his mind flitting to the panic button in the room in case something like before were to repeat itself.

Instead, Peter’s arm came up to claw the oxygen mask off of his face.

“I wouldn’t do that buddy,” Tony simply said, not making any moves to go closer to the boy.

Peter didn’t listen though and continued to slowly remove the mask from his face, struggling to form a grip. Tony bent over and gently shimmied the mask off.

“If you start feeling bad, it goes right back on,” he mumbled to Peter.

Peter didn't respond. Instead, his eyes flitted to the glass of water on the side table. Tony got into action and pressed the button to make Peter's bed rise a little to get him into an almost sitting position before fetching him a glass of water. Once Peter was settled, Tony sat back down on his chair and watched the kid warily.

Peter's mind felt like it was running code, deciphering all the events that had happened not too long ago. Homecoming night, Liz, Liz's dad, car chase, the building fell, plane crashed, didn't make it to alley. He finally turned his head to see the older man.

Mr. Stark is here. I had to say something to him.

Peter wracked his brain for a few seconds before starting in a hoarse voice, "Mr. Stark, I didn't mean to hurt-"

"Anyone," Tony completed the sentence, "I know kid," he said softly.

Peter looked at him in confusion. Had he said this to him before? The only way he could know was... Peter's eyes flitted to his backpack sitting on the ground next to his bed. It had been opened.

Mr. Stark had read my journal.

Maybe he only read the part with his name on it, Peter hoped with all his might. He didn't want Mr. Stark to know. He got a sudden feeling of getting the hell out of this hospital. He was fully awake now and was getting restless, something pressed down on his chest just at the sight of his mentor sitting in front of him. His mind was flashing scenes of the last time he had seen him and his thoughts were going haywire.

"Mr. Stark," Peter started again, coughing a little, "I'm sorry about your plane but I should get out of here. I'm feeling much better now and..." *May*, "May! May will be worried if I don't make it back home soon, what is it like midnight now? She'll freak out, Mr. Stark and-"

"Kid," Tony interrupted with a sigh, "I know about May."

In a moment, Peter's heart sank in his chest. All the adrenaline he had got from the rush he felt to get out of the hospital room was now gone, leaving Peter to physically slump in his bed. He lowered his eyes to his hands which were littered with cuts and had an IV attached at the wrist.

Mr. Stark knew everything, more than what even Ned knew. Mr. Stark knew. Peter didn't know what he should feel about that. On one hand he felt liberated, atleast someone knew what he was going through. But on the other hand, it was *Mr. Stark*, which made him feel absolutely lost. His mind was plagued by the words echoing in his head, *be better, be better, be better*. Was Mr. Stark disappointed in him? He hadn't been better at all.

But most of all, Peter felt weak. He didn't even realize there were tears coming out of his eyes until his vision started getting blurry. Peter was also now aware of the pain in his upper body every time he breathed and the ache in most of his body and his lower back.

Peter was sad. He was so fucking sad. He didn't know why. He had stopped Toomes, but that didn't change anything. He was still sad and alone and... he still felt he couldn't do this anymore.

He slowly looked up at Tony who looked like he was aching to get up from his seat and be closer to Peter but was stopping himself.

Peter was weak. *Weak, weak, weak.*

“Mr. Stark, I,” Peter started in a voice thick with emotion.

I’m okay, I’m totally fine. I can manage on my own, you don’t have to worry.

That’s what Peter wished he could say.

“I don’t want to live in the alley anymore,” he finished softly and let out a sob.

Tony was up in a second, pulling the boy closer to his body, stroking his hair with one hand and gently patting his back with another. Peter tightened his arms around Tony’s waist as he buried his face in his shirt, letting out the sobs worth of weeks of frustration and sadness. Tony stood there, letting the kid cry as long as he needed to and only stepped back once his sobs were reduced to slower breathing.

He pushed the kid’s hair back with his hand and kept it there with Peter leaning into his touch.

“I won’t let you go back to the alley again, Peter, I promise,” Tony said in as sincere a voice as he could.

Peter looked up at him with watery eyes as he continued, “Maybe we can fix things up with May, get the dynamic Parker duo back on track,” Tony tried.

That, Tony decided, was definitely the wrong thing to say as he saw the heart monitor beep frantically as he it had before.

May, May, May. Pack up your things and leave. Ben. Didn’t save Ben.

“No May,” Peter choked out, “Please, no May, no.”

Tony hastily put the oxygen mask back on Peter before the events of earlier today repeated themselves. “Okay, okay, kid, no May. I promise, no May until you want,” he kept speaking gently, trying to comfort the kid as he stroked his hair back, an action Peter had taken a liking to.

Peter’s heart rate came back to normal slowly at Tony’s words. No May, no alley.

Tony looked at the exhausted kid in front of him, eyes already closing, and he acted upon the promise he had made to himself and Peter. *I’ll be there for you, kid.*

“You’re coming home with me, kid,” Tony said, making Peter sigh in relief.

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading!!

let me know your thoughts! and thanks so much for the support.

next chapter will be a long one :) coming in a few days!

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

three times tony didn't have the right words to say and the one time he did
warning for: suicidal thoughts (implied/referenced)
take care of yourselves guys <3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

three times tony didn't have the right words to say and the one time he did
One.

Peter and Tony drive back to the compound in the car driven by Happy a few hours later. The doctors had advised Peter to rest and take it easy, advice that Tony had taken very seriously. As soon as they had reached the building, Tony had carefully guided the young boy to his newly assigned bedroom.

Tony was wary of the kid. He wanted to give him his own space but at the same time the distant look in Peter's eyes worried him. Peter hadn't spoken a word the whole way here and he looked as if he weren't even here, as if his body was just a shell vacant of what makes Peter, Peter.

"So, I'll go order some dinner. Chinese sounds good?" Tony asked, only half expecting an answer with the blank look on Peter's face.

But to his surprise, Peter nodded solemnly. Satisfied with the answer, Tony made his way out the door to get dinner set up. Peter sat quietly on the bed, not making any effort to get comfortable or lie down. He just sat there, his brain whirring. Peter's brain wasn't quiet, it was so so loud but there were too many thoughts to be coherently thought about.

He sat still and looked straight ahead, not concentrating on anything. He sat there unresponsive even as Tony came into the doorway and sighed at the sight in front of him. He didn't flinch when Tony gently put his hand on his shoulders and softly said his name. Didn't react when Tony nudged him carefully and caused him to stand. Didn't falter when Tony's hand rested on Peter's back and guided him to the dining table and pushed him down into the chair.

Peter just stared straight ahead, no emotion on his face.

"Come on, bud, eat up," he heard Tony say but Peter didn't react. Peter wasn't here, he was somewhere far away, watching himself sitting on the table with a plateful of Chinese takeout in front of him. He could hear Tony calling him but it was as if he was underwater. Distantly, he felt something touch his hands but he couldn't *feel*. He knew Tony was crouching down in front of him, looking up at him and Peter was looking straight at him but he couldn't *see*.

Tony was struggling to keep calm at the sight of the distant looking boy in front of him but he knew he had to. He took one of Peter's hands in his and gently squeezed it. Peter's face flinched a little which was more than what Tony had gotten from him all evening so Tony continued holding his hand.

“Peter, hey, kid, you with me?” Tony asked and Peter slowly looked up at him, eyes still not fully focused on his mentor’s face. Tony took Peter’s other hand and held it too, slowly rubbing circles in the inside of his palm with his thumb.

“Hey kid, come on, come back. You’re at the compound with me, can you hear me?” Tony continued, his voice making Peter finally really look at Tony.

“M-Mr. Stark?” Peter whispered.

“Yeah kid, it’s me, you’re okay,” Tony said gently.

Peter didn’t know what had happened. He had felt like he had been *out* but he was here and Mr. Stark was here and he didn’t know what to do, *what do i do, what do i do.*

“Mr. Stark I’m scared,” Peter whispered, his face morphing into one of worry. He didn’t know why he said it or why he was scared but he didn’t know *what to do.*

“You’re okay kid, you’re fine,” Tony said steadily, hoping his calm voice would help calm the kid down. He was still crouching in front of Peter, who was bent down in his seat, weakly squeezing Tony’s hands as if to make him stay in place. “I’m not going anywhere kid,” he said, trying to quell the kid’s fears. Peter searched his mentor’s face for any sign of a lie but found none causing him to slouch forward from the seat and rest his face on Tony’s shoulder. Tony let go of one of Peter’s hands and used it to stroke Peter’s hair.

“I’m here, you’re okay,” Tony repeated, hoping his words gave Peter atleast a little comfort. But he wasn’t really sure if they did.

Two.

After the awkward dinner a few nights ago, Peter decided to keep his distance from Mr. Stark. He wasn’t sure what had happened to him that night but what he did know was that it bothered Mr. Stark. He bothered Mr. Stark.

Living at the compound was... Peter couldn’t tell what it was like because he didn’t really feel like he was living. He hadn’t gone out of his room since the dinner. He was either on the bed, wrapped up in the huge quilt or sitting next to the window just staring.

Peter knew this wasn’t normal behavior, but he didn’t really care. He didn’t really do anything. Even as he stared off into space, he didn’t think. Didn’t think about May or Ned or Spiderman or school. He just stared, completely empty and devoid of emotion.

Tony visited once in a while with a worried face and lunch. Or dinner, Peter wasn’t ever sure. Peter ate sometimes as Tony sat next to him on the bed, telling him about some meeting he attended or some tech article he read. Peter listened but never responded.

He heard Tony when he said he wouldn’t be back until late at night and that FRIDAY will have his dinner delivered. Peter hadn’t bothered to nod, not because he hadn’t wanted to but because he... couldn’t.

Peter hadn’t gone out of his room for days. So it was a surprise to himself when he found himself on the roof. He didn’t know why he was here or really how did he get up here but he decided he liked it. It was cold here, just as it had been in the alley and the wind was strong tonight.

He liked these things because they told him he could feel. He wasn’t empty on the roof as he felt the biting cold and shivered a little in his thin pajamas and t shirt. But it wasn’t always a good thing, not being empty because it meant that Peter could now think. And boy did Peter’s brain had

some thoughts.

He was at the compound. With Mr. Stark. Mr. Stark. He had bothered Mr. Stark. He was such a burden. He was here and not with May. May. Did May still hate him? Mr. Stark said May knew he was here. Was she happy about it? Did she even want him back? Why would she want him back. He hadn't been better. Be better.

Not being empty meant that Peter could hear as if he wasn't underwater now. He could hear Mr. Stark was on the roof now too.

“Kid?” Tony called out, soft enough to not startle Peter. He had flown in back from his meeting only to learn that the kid was on the roof. While he was happy he had atleast gotten out of his room, the sight of Peter standing at the very edge of the roof made Tony's heartbeat quicken a little.

“Hi Mr. Stark,” Peter replied, still facing the other side from Tony. Tony walked slowly towards him, stuffing his hands in his pockets at how cold it was up here.

“What'cha doing there kid?” Tony asked, trying to be casual but keeping a sharp eye at Peter's legs which were shivering a little.

Peter turned around to face Tony now and Tony was surprised to see the tear tracks on the kid's face.

“I wanted to feel, Mr. Stark,” Peter replied, as if Tony could understand.

Tony wanted to understand, wanted to say the right words.

“You wanna try that from a little over here?” Tony asked him, pointing to the spot next to him.

Peter tilted his head in confusion before turning a little and looking at the steep fall right behind him. His eyes squinted in recognition. He could fall.

“I could fall,” Peter said, still staring at the ground far, far below.

“Yeah, you could,” Tony said warily, stepping forward, trying to be prepared for any situation that arises.

“Should I?” Peter asked, voice wavering a little, his tears unstoppable at this moment.

“No,” Tony replied quickly, “No. You shouldn't Peter, come on bud, come down he-”

“Why?” Peter turned back and stared right at Tony. He was asking him a question, waiting for Tony's answer. Tony didn't know what to answer. He didn't know the right words, he never had.

“Because we need you, kid. Me, your aunt, your friends, Happy. We need you,” Tony tried.

Peter shook his head, letting his shoulders shake from crying. “You don't. May hates me, May wasn't there and H-Happy never listened and y-you took away my suit and you hate me. You don't need me, you hate me. All of you hate me, you-” the sentence was cut off by Peter choking on a sob and Tony stepping forward quickly and wrapping Peter in a hug, stepping away from the edge.

“I'm sorry, kid, I'm sorry. I'm here,” Tony whispered into Peter's hair as Peter tightly wrapped his arms around Tony as if asking him for the strength to stand up. And Tony stood there, holding the boy shivering from his sobs and the cold. He held him and whispered all the words that he could.

Three.

Tony learnt sometimes actions worked better than words. Tony wasn't an expert at either when it came to Peter but he tried. When he could hear Peter screaming in the middle of the night, Tony sprinted from wherever he was straight to Peter's bedroom.

He knew he had to be gentle and careful. He had learnt that Peter liked having Tony's hand in his hair so that's what Tony did. He sat next to Peter and held his thrashing body down and called his name until Peter woke up, distraught and sobbing. Tony kept one hand on Peter's shoulder and used the other to brush his hair back.

"It's okay Peter, it's okay," Tony said as soothingly as possible. Peter grabbed Tony's hand and looked up at him with glistening eyes that made his heart break.

"Please don't kick me out, I'll be good, I swear," Peter mumbled frantically, looking at Tony desperately.

"I'm not kicking you out, I'm *never* kicking you out Peter," Tony explained to him with as steady a voice as he could.

Peter visibly sighed in relief at Tony's words and Tony felt like maybe he had found the right words after all. But when tears started rolling out of Peter's eyes, Tony went back to actions over words. He stroked Peter's hair and held him close. If his words didn't work, Tony's presence pressed against Peter, the heat from his body enveloping Peter's shaking form did.

Four.

Sometimes things caught Tony off guard. Peter and him had been working in the lab together. Tony had been surprised when Peter had warily walked into the lab and asked if he could help with something. He had immediately started showing Peter cool things and now they worked in silence.

Suddenly, Peter looked up from what he had been working with and looked straight at Tony, causing him to stare back.

"Thank you, Mr. Stark," Peter said, sincerity clear in his voice.

Tony felt his heart glow with affection for the kid in front of him. He had come a long way.

"I know I've been a burden on you," Peter continued and Tony let him, even though he wanted to interrupt him so bad, "Thank you for taking care of me."

This was it, this was Tony's chance. All those times when he didn't have the right words... today was it. He left his workstation and went up to Peter.

"Listen kid," Tony started and stopped. He didn't know what to say. He looked at Peter and his expectant eyes and his mind blanked out.

"You're not a burden, Peter," Tony started, wary of his own words, "You never were. You were always better Peter, you don't have to prove anything to me."

Be better. Be better. Be better.

You were always better, Peter.

Peter's eyes watered at the words. He didn't have anything to prove. Mr. Stark wasn't

disappointed. He didn't hate him.

"I don't hate you kid, I never did," Tony responded telling Peter that he had just said his thoughts out loud, "I'm proud of you, kid. And I'll be here, for as long as you want me."

"Thank you, Mr. Stark," Peter whispered, not trusting his voice. "I.. I was thinking I want to see May," Peter started again, "no-not move in with her, I mean, if that's okay with you. But, I was just thinking, I want things to be better with her, and I mean, I-"

"That sounds good, bud, we can meet her together, okay?" Tony asked and Peter nodded, not wanting to see her alone. Not yet. "And you can stay here as long as you want, May can't decide that for you. She did something wrong and it's up to you if you want to forgive her or not."

Peter nodded again and surprised Tony by hugging him tightly. Tony chuckled and stumbled back a little, hands coming to stroke Peter's hair as it had so many times before.

"Don't ever leave me, Mr. Stark," Peter whispered into Tony's shoulder.

"I won't."

Chapter End Notes

and that's it!!

thank you sooo much for reading and for all your lovely comments and support <3
let me know what you thought of this chapter, i know it isn't the best but it was really
hard to write and i hope i did it at least a little justice

new ironedad fics coming soon! :) <3

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!